

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER 1919.

ANNE ISABELLA THACKERAY.

(LADY RITCHIE.)

'FROM the Porch,' the last book Lady Ritchie ever published, is dedicated 'To our friend Rhoda Broughton'; and this friend, loving and beloved, seemed indicated as the most appropriate author of some commemorative tribute. Miss Broughton, however, felt that such work lay outside her sphere; but in declining the task she sent these few sentences, which she has allowed me to place at the head of the following article:

'As I think of her, Matthew Arnold's hackneyed catchword comes back to me, "Sweetness and light"—yet to that "brief abstract" there is much, how much! to be added. The humour wholly belonging to her alone, which stole so prettily and kindly through her writings, lit up into mirth for herself as well as for others her own occasional absence of mind and its droll consequences; and played, with how gentle a brightness, how bright a gentleness, on those small absurdities in persons and things which, seen at their right angle, give salt to the sometimes insipid dish of daily life. Humour! yes. Scarcely one of her letters lacked some stroke of it. In one of her latest she said, in praising the climate of her Freshwater home: "The —s arrived in fragments, but went away twelve basketsful."

'Of her exquisite literary gift, I can say nothing new. Thank Heaven! she has not "fait école"! She stands alone in her delicate brilliance; the Groundlings have felt that to imitate her was hopeless.

'Vividly comes back to me the nearly sixty years ago memory of my astonished delight when the "Story of Elizabeth" burst in its wonderful novelty and spring like quality on my consciousness, written, as I was told, by a girl hardly older than myself! And later, when I choked over Monsieur le Maire's death in "The Village on the Cliff"—Monsieur le Maire so absurd and so heroic!—how I longed to know his creator, as, thank God! I afterwards did.

'Genius, humour, inimitable pleasantness she had, but Love was the keynote of her life. Once I asked her, with a rather stupid intrusiveness, whether good or ill had preponderated in that life. She answered,

after a moment's pause, with that irradiated look which those to whom she was most dear knew so well: "There has always been Love." And Love in full measure was with her to the end. . . .

In her little paper on Charles Dickens, Lady Ritchie tells us that when his daughter asked her what she could remember of him, she answered that she 'had lived all her life in his company but could almost count the occasions of actual meeting upon her fingers.'

I am thankful to say it would take more than one pair of hands to number the hours my old friend and I have spent together since the day when her great father's spectacles grew dim as he watched me capering round a Christmas tree; yet now that her own daughter asks the same question of me, it comes home to me with a sigh for lost opportunities, how few the times have been when I have held her kind hand, have looked in her face, and listened to her beautiful low voice, compared with the impression that remains of a singularly faithful friendship, the feeling of a presence tranquil and benign that has shone through my whole life. Many people must be thinking with me of what we have lost—of what we cannot lose—for wherever she passed she left this sense of benediction behind her.

I.

Anne Isabella Thackeray was in many respects a favoured and fortunate person. The elder of the two daughters of William Makepeace Thackeray, she was born straight into a rich heritage of varied interest. The very tragedy that shadowed her father's life, and made their household, as she touchingly says, 'more or less a bachelor's establishment,' was not all loss in its consequences, since it made the little half-bereaved girls equally at home in two cities, and added the early Parisian experiences, from which she was to distil some of her most picturesque pages, to the wealth of material constantly being garnered by this apparently abstracted young person. At the age of four she was already an enthusiastic student of French politics, though the particular dynast to whom she vowed a passionate allegiance varied with the succession of ladies who reigned in the more restricted sphere of her grandmother's kitchen.

'The sons and daughters of men and women eminent in their generation,' she writes, 'are from circumstances fortunate in

their opportunities. From childhood they know their parents' friends and contemporaries quite naturally and without excitement.' A child who met Leigh Hunt in a morning walk, who in her ordinary wandering about the house could come on Count d'Orsay lolling with studied carelessness, or Trelawny scowling at himself in the glass; who heard Chopin playing his last compositions in the little bare apartment where he was dying; who drank tea in Goethe's own garden-house at Weimar, where Goethe's own grandson handed the cup; who spent long afternoons with Mrs. Carlyle, and assisted at the memorable party given by her father for Charlotte Brontë, the little lady in barege, 'with a pattern of faint green moss,' a party which proved so dull that she caught the host stealing on tiptoe from the house—was indeed 'fortunate in her opportunities,' nor did she fail to make use of them for our benefit. She once told a kinswoman of mine how, after her father's death, and during the hush of grief when people are a little afraid of intruding, she and her sister were telling each other that things would now be different, and that they must no longer hope to see many of those whom his presence had brought to the house, when, as if in answer to their overmodest misgivings, the door opened to admit his great crony, Colonel Hamley. It was characteristic of that loyal friend to be the first to rally to the orphaned girls; but it is difficult to believe that anyone who had the chance of frequenting those two charming women should have needed any other inducement to do so, and indeed there is hardly a name famous in the art and literature of England during the last half-century that does not occur in Lady Ritchie's reminiscences.

Thackeray's daughter was certain not to lack the company of cultivated and interesting people, but she had no need to borrow a reflected lustre; she was far indeed from the confraternity of Captain Sumph. Into any society we may be sure she brought at least as good as she got; and through all contacts she remains a highly individual figure, her character and temperament not less her own than her gifts, and her style in writing. Her originality was absolute, occasionally even a little startling; but if she sometimes said very unexpected things it was from no desire to dazzle or bewilder. She only gave vent with perfect spontaneity to the thoughts that arose in a singularly unconventional mind; and a beautiful dignity, quite remote from self-assertion, and as natural as everything else about her, protected her through life from the faintest suspicion of affectation.

'If we compare the talk of great men and women,' she says in

her paper on Ruskin, 'one element is to be found in them all, a certain directness . . . a gift for reaching their hearers at once, giving straight from themselves and not in reflections from other minds. Sunshine, in short, not moonshine.' If she failed sometimes to 'reach her hearers,' that was their fault (or at least their misfortune); she 'gave straight from herself'; nor was that the only attribute she shared with the sun. Her whole nature was sunny, warming, cheering, sap-stirring, life-giving—and, like the other luminary, her tendency (she couldn't help it) to shine on the just and on the unjust sometimes gave the impression of a little want of discrimination. Yet she discriminated. Oh yes, she discriminated. The creator of Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Palmer knew a snob when she met one as unerringly as the great professor of snobology himself. Only her charity embraced them too. Her great gift of genuine sympathy made her understand that there was something to like in the least likeable, and if there wasn't, surely that was the hardest case of all, the greatest reason for pity. She knew that most of the harm in the world is done by kind, fussy people, like her own Madame de Tracy, from the best of motives; but if she could have believed in that monstrous creation of literature, a conscious villain, she would have been sorrier for him than for anyone. She is not only sorry, but makes her reader so, for poor, warped, passionate Mrs. Gilmour in her one consciously evil act, her implied lie to Dampier that Elizabeth had refused to see him.

She did not live narrowly among the practisers of her own craft. The studio was not less to her than the library. Many painters were among her closest friends. It would be easy to sneer at some of her enthusiasms, but she cared always more for the soul of beauty than for the method by which its rendering was attempted, more for the humble and faithful spirit that is common to all fine art, than for this or that of its various contending schools.

No account of her could be true (I was going to say 'complete,' but what account of any one can hope to be *that*?) which did not touch on her sensibility to music. And here, too, she was happy, in that many of her most immediate circle were trained musicians. There is a ringing melodious little 'Blackstick,' 'Concerning Joseph Joachim,' the youth in whom Mendelssohn detected 'the promise of a noble service to art,' a promise many of us have heard the man so gloriously fulfil. All her life is set to music. The great strains come sweeping through passage after passage of her writing. She wrote of it as a poet, not as a musician, and I think had no

technical skill ; but to watch her face as she listened to fine music was to add for oneself another instrument to those that made the harmony.

'*L'harmonie des belles choses*' ! Even her material surroundings had a grace and felicity by no means universal in the days of her youth. Her father was among the few in the early years of Queen Victoria to care for eighteenth-century furniture and china. From childhood to age she lived in pleasant rooms, surrounded by pretty things, which is more than many much richer people succeed in achieving. Memory recalls her always relieved against a becoming background, which being also inherited, like the illustrious friends, 'quite simply and without excitement,' remained where backgrounds should, and never usurped the front of the stage, as some people's pots and chairs are a little apt to do.

In this connection it is not irrelevant to mention that I never saw her dressed in anything that was not well chosen and in a high degree suitable. The awful tragedy, so pathetically recorded, of the 'best bonnets' with their gay ribbons, and wreaths of pink and blue acacia, which a stern parent forbade her and her sister to wear, must have seared her young soul. Perhaps her early Parisian initiation, when Paris was still the arbiter of elegance, had something to do with the purity of her taste, her fondness for tender hues, for falling draperies, for old lace, for all that flowed and softened and accompanied. As she passed imperceptibly from youth to maturity, and from that to age, her attire adapted itself to the changes as naturally as the foliage of a tree follows the varying seasons.

II.

If the gods were kind to Anne Thackeray in the father, grandmother, sister, brother-in-law, friends, and even the chairs and tables they bestowed on her, they were not less propitious to Anne Ritchie in the matter of her husband. At an age when many women have made up their minds that a whole side of life is not for them, she found love and devotion, and happy marriage and motherhood, laid at her feet. She hesitated long to accept them. I hope I am not violating a sacred confidence by telling how, in the period of ill-health and depression that followed her sister's death, one of the determining factors had been her conviction that she should not live long, and that her husband would then be able to marry again. 'But now,' said she, with her bright wistful

April look—'now I am so well and happy, I don't think I am going to die at all, and I sometimes wonder if I have done right.' It was characteristic of her through life to decide things instinctively with absolute rightness, and then be much troubled by conscientious doubts as to the wisdom of her decisions. She remained always a little sensitive about her seniority, but there could be no question of any real disparity. If she brought to their union the eternal youth of Genius, he seemed endowed from boyhood with the strength, the self-reliance, the maturity of taste and judgment which the rest of us hardly acquire with wrinkles and grey hairs. Nothing ripens the intelligence so early as that terrible ironic perception of the tears and laughter in things, which is vulgarly called 'a sense of humour.' Richmond Ritchie possessed that in an eminent degree, and had, moreover, one of the surest and most brilliant minds I have ever known. He had begun to think, and to think for himself, long before most men are quite sure what thought means. Intellectually he was fully his wife's equal, perhaps rather more than her equal. The fact alone that before he was twenty he had reached the decision from which he never wavered, that she was the only woman in the world for him, shows that, when some years later she not without a struggle agreed to marry him, she was not throwing herself away upon a foolish boy.

In Cambridge days, his contemporaries looked forward to seeing his name blazing among the immortals, and I have never been able to get over a certain sense of waste at the harnessing of such a Pegasus, though the vehicle he was condemned to draw was nothing less than the huge juggernaut car of England's Indian dependency. We are constantly exhorted to 'hitch our waggon to a star'; and perhaps if more stars of his magnitude were hitched to the official waggons they might run more smoothly.

I must not write as if he had been in any sense a failure. To any one of the name of Ritchie, India was a tradition, almost an inheritance. He became an entirely successful and highly respected public servant, his work no doubt useful and beneficent to thousands; but I still resent the wearing out in incessant drudgery of so fine an instrument that was meant for the wonder and delight of mankind. I grudge him to that old Saturn of a British Empire that thinks the brightest of the children it devours amply rewarded with a none too generous 'handful of silver,' and more than honoured by 'a ribbon to stick in his coat.'

No wife ever respected her husband more whole-heartedly than

Anne Ritchie; his nature supplied just the prop on which hers could spread itself most happily to the sun, and ripen into glory of rich refreshing clusters.

One day when I happened to be with her she received a message that her little son, who was spending the afternoon with a school-fellow, had met with an accident. We hurried to the neighbour's house, leaving word for Richmond to follow when he arrived from London. I can see now the disordered room, the frightened faces, the victim pale but plucky on the sofa, with the great gash he had managed to inflict on his unfortunate leg; but what chiefly comes back to me across the years, is the sudden look of trust and appeasement in the poor mother's face on the arrival of the husband and father, and his quiet competent taking charge of the situation.

In later life, the central figure of this adventure has told me of what use she was to his father by her charming and gracious reception of any one connected with the office, from a travelling Begum to some stranded and destitute Indian youth—while how much he in turn helped her with her own work will never be known to anyone but their two selves.

III.

I certainly do not suggest that her husband wrote her books for her; she had shown in the years before her marriage how little she needed that any one should do that. Criticism, restraint, she may have owed to him, but he would have been the first to recognise how much of its essential charm must have evaporated with any extraneous touch upon her actual writing. It is even truer of Anne Thackeray than of most authors that she lives in a very special sense in the printed page.

'I have loved her books for years,' a friend who never met her wrote to me the other day, 'and always felt I loved her too. The atmosphere in them must have been due to her charming personality shining through all she wrote.'

But if her books were in an unusual degree herself, that does not mean that they were therefore easy to write. No good writing is. She had a very distinctive style, the result, as all style must be, of infinite pains and a careful and happy selection of words, but seeming so natural and spontaneous as to deceive the unwary into the common mistake that it was all a matter of some fairy gift and as easy as breathing. She herself knew better. 'It is scarcely the

printing of the book or the framing of the picture,' she tells us, 'that puts a date to the hour in which the mind ripens, and carries out its conceptions.' Years of discipline and self-education had gone to fashioning the instrument of which she came to be such a mistress.

'No one knows the reams and reams that I have written and destroyed,' said she to her daughter. Once she told the same loving critic that she would like to bring out a new edition of her novels, without the adjectives; she 'thought then they would be very good.' Like all epigrams, this contains a grain of sound criticism to an ounce of hyperbole. If she occasionally overindulged in epithets, it was but the defect of her quality; her books would have been much barer and less coloured without them. Take this opening page from one of her ingenious adaptations of the old fairy-tales:

'There is an undeniable fascination in pastoral music, in smock frocks, in porches with green curtains of leaf and tendril to shade the glare of the summer's day. These pretty old villages, whatever their hidden defects may be, have at least the innocent charms of confiding lattice, arched elm boughs and babbling streamlets. Perhaps the clear water rushes under a wooden bridge, washing by the doctor's garden wall, and past the village green, shady with its ancient elms, beneath which the children play, and the elders stretch their tired limbs, and travelling on into green summery dells of clematis and willow light. . . .'

You may say that here are too many plums for the pudding (I have purposely selected a rather extreme example); but begin to pull them out, and see how the whole thing comes to bits. Is there an adjective that one would not be sorry to miss, or that does not play its part in the general symphony? I have gone with some care through hundreds of her pages, and have had the greatest difficulty in finding a word that I would willingly alter or omit. The more, and the more critically, one reads her, the finer and richer her English strikes upon the ear. It may not always be packed and close in its quality, but it flows pure, lucid, sparkling, and with a sweet rippling melody all its own. The difficulty is not in finding examples for quotation, but in selecting among them. Could the feeling of still summer moonlight be more perfectly given than in the following passage from 'The White Cat'?

'It was a lovely vast night. That strange harmony which is not sound, which is not silence, was vibrating everywhere. The moon was slowly winning a silver victory, and conquering realm after realm of sand and down and sea. . . .'

"A lovely *vast* night"! Is not that well said?

But in none of her stories does she paint such satisfying pictures as in some of her later recollections. Whenever she comes near Tennyson or his enchanted island, she seems specially inspired. She calls up Farringford for us in a sentence:

'There hung Dante with his solemn nose and wreath; Italy gleamed over the doorways; friends' faces lined the passages, books filled the shelves, and a glow of crimson was everywhere; the great oriel window was full of green and golden leaves, of the sounds of birds, and of the distant sea. . . .'

Turn the page, and walk with her to 'High Down,' 'when the lark has flown out of hearing, and the thrushes begin,' by 'the lovely creamy stream of flowers that flows along the lanes,' where 'the hyacinth pools of blue shine in the woods,' past 'the glory of gorse blazing on the beacon hill' . . . and so on through the whole beautiful passage to its climax:

'when you come at last to the Needles, and may look down upon the ridge of rocks that rise, crisp, sharp, shining, out of the blue wash of fierce delicious waters. . . .'

How the effect is built up word by word as we leave the wood behind, 'the little wood of nightingales and thrushes,' and go climbing to the heights above! 'The blue wash of fierce delicious waters'! The phrase sings in one's head like a favourite tune.

In a very sympathetic paper that appeared not long after her death in the Literary Supplement of *The Times*, the writer expresses surprise that she is not an established classic. It may come yet. In my youth only a little band of the faithful read Jane Austen (about whom Lady Ritchie wrote one of her most fascinating appreciations), but any cleverish young person would have been ashamed not to know something of George Eliot. I should be sorry to have to say what the cleverish young person of these days may or may not have *read*, but whereas a quite shameless and impenitent ignorance of "Daniel Deronda" might be confessed, any allusion to Mr. Collins or Maple Grove would be bound to meet with some responsive knowingness. Our author knew how books come to life

again. 'It seems a pity,' she says in the first of her 'Blackstick Papers,'

'when books pass away as they undoubtedly do, delightful books, worthy to be remembered. . . . But sometimes as by a miracle, even after a century or two, such books are called back to existence, and raised from the dust. Their hearts seem to beat once more; the time has come for their reincarnation. . . .'

If it be true that she is no longer read, one can but hope, for the sake of the younger people yet to come, that some such miracle may be wrought in her own case.

IV.

'My father,' Lady Ritchie tells us, 'somewhere says that he forgets dates and facts, and only remembers impressions. . . .' Her father's daughter so far derived from him, that her books are written very largely in impressions. The reader is sometimes left to infer the facts; the dates must take care of themselves; they do not always quite succeed in doing so.

It is not to be dogmatically asserted that it is the best possible way of telling a story, but it was the best (because the only) possible way for her. You may like it or you may not; it takes two to make a bargain. For myself, I own to being one of her most fanatical adherents. 'Where a book ends and the reader begins,' she herself says, 'is as difficult to determine as any other objective and subjective problem'—and again in another place:

'The sympathy between the writer and the reader of a book is a very subtle and strange one. The author perhaps writes . . . not in the words and descriptions of the events that really happened, but in a language . . . of which the full significance is scarcely known even to himself. Only in the great unknown world which he addresses, there surely is . . . the friend of friends who will understand.'

Some authors create characters who live in the memory like people we have known, though we may not remember very much of what happened to them. When we think of Miss Thackeray's stories, on the other hand, certain incidents come back to us more vividly than the actors who took part in them, such, for example, as Elizabeth's sudden irruption into the prayer-meeting, in her pink robes, and flashing her gold fan into the eyes of the startled

worshippers. On looking up the reference I was astonished to find that the occurrence, so sharp and vital as I recall it, is not even indicatively narrated, but merely alluded to as having happened; yet after all these years it remains like a painful moment at which he had personally assisted, to one who has forgotten so many where he was present in the flesh, and who, to be honest, had retained no very definite idea of the girl whose defiant act had caused the scandal.

One means by which our author was able to stamp an impression on the minds of her readers was no doubt her copious use of felicitous detail. Like many of her gifts it seemed easy to copy, to the wrecking of some who attempted it. The effect was not to be attained by slapping in bits of irrelevant circumstance. Everything depended on judicious selection. When Dolly goes for a walk with Robert Henley in the lanes between Kensington and Chelsea, with what art the future is made to throw its shadow on the rosy path!—

‘They were going they knew not where; into a land of Canaan, so Dolly thought it; green cabbages, a long gleaming canal, hawthorn hedges, and a great over-arching sky that began to turn red when the sun set. Now and then they came to some old house that had outstood storms and years, fluttering signals of distress in the shape of old shirts and clothes hung out to dry. . . . Distant bells rang in this wide desolate country. Women came tramping home from their long day’s work in the fields, and looked hard at the handsome young couple. . . . The women trudge wearily home. The young folks walk step by step into life. The birds cross the sky in a sudden flight. The cabbages grow where they are planted. . . . *They missed the Chelsea Lane. . . .*’

Could anything give more absolutely in a few words the sense of the dreaming, happy girl having in some way taken the wrong turning? Her cabbages, too, we feel as we read, will ‘grow where they are planted.’

I am told that its author never spoke with much favour of ‘Old Kensington.’ Perhaps her special treatment is not calculated for carrying quite so many pages. I think she got bored with the details about money and wills and inheritances; writing about people she could not quite like, people who even in youth could be selfish or intriguing, seems to clog her pen. Yet how good it is! If it depresses us at times, it is just as life depresses us with its mistakes and disappointments and misunderstandings. Of how

many longer, and ever so much drearier, fictions of a younger school can we say that their chief defect is being too like life? Whatever its faults, 'Old Kensington' contains two perfectly drawn figures, Lady Sarah with her rough exterior and loving heart, so typical yet so individual, as all good characters in fiction must be, and the best bit of pure satire in which Miss Thackeray ever indulged—the immortal, unforgettable Mrs. Palmer. How could I imply that her people do not stick in the memory, when these two rise at once to confute me, and Mrs. Butler hurries from Eaton Square to join them—Mrs. Butler whose 'not de notre classe' has been a household word to me through life? There is not a false note in Philippa Palmer from her first appearance stumbling over her long dress in her haste to embrace the children she has systematically neglected, to our last glimpse of her 'seriously angry' and 'settling herself down for another nap.'

'Mrs. Palmer's mother had been an Alderville, and the Aldervilles are all young, beautiful, helpless, stout, and elegantly dressed. Mrs. Palmer took after them, she said. But helpless as Philippa was her feebleness always leant in the direction in which she wished to go, and in some mysterious fashion she seemed to get on as well as other stronger people. . . . There was something soft, harmonious, gently affecting about Dolly's Mamma. . . . As an injured woman she was simply perfect. . . . She was enchanted with her future son-in-law; he could hardly get rid of her. . . . Briareus himself could scarcely have supplied arms to support her unsparing weakness, to hand her parcels and footstools, to carry her shawls and cushions, to sort the packets of her correspondence. She had the Admiral's letters tied up with various coloured ribbons, and docketed "cruel," "moderately abusive," "apologetic," "canting," "business" . . .'

The future son-in-law, Robert Henley himself, is good satire too. His defects are indicated by a thousand deft touches; indeed the pointing fingers are even too numerous, with the result of making us a trifle impatient that Dorothea, who is not meant to be a fool, should be blind to what everyone else sees so clearly. But after all, can anyone truthfully deny that the world of his experience teems with just such cases?

It looks as if one were condemned immediately to qualify or retract every statement to which he commits himself about this dear, imponderable author. He denies her a quality; and from every page to which he turns for confirmation there starts to

confound him an instance of her possessing it in a high degree. He asserts that she wrote in a particular manner; and fails to find a corroborative instance. He intimates that a book is not among her best; and every quotation turns Balaam-like to bless her altogether. I am anxious to avoid the appearance of mere fulsome panegyric, but her elusive charm baffles criticism. It is like trying to measure sunlight with a foot-rule. We may venture at least to complain that Raban remains always a little vague to us. Beyond his melancholy and his long legs, and his unerring instinct for saying what will offend the one person he wishes to conciliate, we do not get much information about Dolly's eventual husband; nor is it ever made plain why the episode of his first marriage, throughout which he seems to have behaved with an even Quixotic honour, should have marked him with so dark a stigma.

In these uncertainties we do at last touch a real weakness. The heroes of none of the stories seem quite to justify the emotions they arouse in the always attractive heroines.

Miss Thackeray looked at her young men quite frankly across the ditch of sex, whereby she at least avoided coming to grief in it, as so many of her sister novelists have done in the attempt to present them from within. Her attitude towards them is kindly, detached, a little critical, certainly not at all admiring. They are often faithful lovers, and nice enough young fellows; but they lurk always more or less in the shadowy background. We know almost as little of Dick Butler as either of the two women who loved him so devotedly, and made themselves so unhappy about him. Their creator rarely allows her poor heroes any good looks; the handsome ones are not as a rule quite trustworthy. They are mostly plain and shortish; they have beards, spectacles, foolish enthusiasms. They get into 'scrapes,' which seldom means more than that they have been spending rather too much money. In moments of emotion they knock over little tables, or go striding for miles about the country—but when all is said, they are real as far as they go, and it is better to leave a character truthfully if a little sketchily indicated, than to paint elaborate pictures with a crowd of false details.

V.

When I re-read the 'Village on the Cliff' the other day, it seemed to me no less touching and exquisite than when I regarded it from so

different an angle fifty years ago. It is made, as all its author's books are, of the simplest materials—the little hopes and fears, the stifled loves and emotions of everyday life. Like a wise singer with a very sweet voice of limited range, she seldom attempted anything that was not well within her means.

I remember in youth being enormously impressed by Reine, but she does not seem to me now quite so successfully handled as her little rival, dear palpitating Catherine George, with her big round eyes and rough dark hair, her sudden blushes and hidden devotion, vibrating to every touch like a too highly strung harp. Wherever she appears, alone in her dusty schoolroom with the 'Idylls of the King,' clutching her little sisters to her heart, in her brief and so rare moments of happiness, swooped on and borne across the Channel like some helpless creature in predatory talons, weeping into the well at Tracy where no one may find her tears, married, widowed, with scarce a consenting movement, she is always sweet, tender, pathetic, the plaything of Fate, the victim of circumstances.

The scenery is hardly less a part of the drama than the actors. How the sense of the moral and material wilderness of Eaton Square is given (where else in wide London *could* the Hervey Butlers have lived?), with Mrs. Butler at her 'handmill' of a Davenport, 'at which she ground down paper, pens, monograms, stamps, regrets, delights into notes and turned them out by the dozen'! Lambswold with its lawns and geraniums, and pale melancholy morning-room, presided over by the portrait of the heiress who, though she 'never married,' had mysteriously contrived to 'bring the property into the Butler family'—'a picture all in blue and green shadows, in a clouded world of paint' (has the method of a master ever been so concisely caricatured?)—the smell of the grapes in the courtyard at Tracy, the sunlit brasses of Reine's kitchen that strike such a chord in Catherine's memory, all live and play their parts, the little windswept chalet with its weathercocks—the cliffs—the sea!

I have a special tenderness for Fontaine. What a good fellow he was, what a hero, what a gentle, chivalrous, considerate being! And Monsieur Mèrard, who felt only three things to be really important—'that coffee should be hot, that you and your partner should hold at least five trumps between you, and that the washer-woman should not iron your collars into ridges.' He and his terrible old wife might have come straight out of Balzac—and so might Madame de Tracy mère, who never even appears, and is only 'a voice, an appetite, a pair of velvet shoes to Catherine.'

The whole story is told with a running accompaniment of juvenile chorus on both sides of the Channel. If the little Butlers must be left behind in Belgravia, the little de Tracys and Toto and Josette are waiting in France to 'take up the wondrous tale.' No other writer has ever had such a feeling for children. There is a patter of little feet in every page she wrote. Quite irrelevant infants come crowding into all her stories; she can't keep them out. Her heroines must love and suffer, must be deserted, returned to, even asked in marriage under the fire of the round eyes. If they are not widowed mothers, or governesses, or elder sisters, they must borrow a niece or the concierge's baby. Their author cannot really warm to them without a pudgy fist tugging at their skirts, or a fat cheek cuddled against theirs. Her young people are not impossible fairies or humorous little monsters, but just the children of everyone's nurseries and schoolrooms. They career through her writing often dirty, sometimes naughty, but invariably very much alive. Nor are they always mere attendant Amorini, but have sometimes whole articles to themselves. Her earliest contribution to the *Cornhill*, and I think the first page she ever printed, was a description called 'Little Scholars,' of a ragged school started by dear friends of hers and mine, long dead. How she loved her own children and grandchildren, not to mention innumerable little nephews, nieces, great-nephews, and nieces and cousins of every generation, shines out from nearly all her letters. Her father relates that at the age of two she wept over a Bible picture of the sacrifice of Isaac, would not have the 'ickle boy' killed, and 'tried to pull him off the altar.' For eighty years thereafter she was never to waver in her earnest desire to have little boys, and little girls too, pulled off the altars of the various Molochs to whom Ignorance and Cruelty were immolating them. Some of her most beautiful pages are dedicated to pleading their cause.

VI.

For those who read with any object beyond saving an hour from thought, the interest of fiction must always lie, after the play of emotion, in the picture of life as it presented itself to the eye of the writer and from this point of view his analysis of the world in which he lived and moved must always be of greater value than the most skilful synthesis of a bygone age. Such a reconstruction has never been more brilliantly accomplished than in

'Esmond'; and in 'Miss Angel' his daughter set herself to do for the later eighteenth century what Thackeray had done for its beginning. The book is full of the qualities that make everything she wrote so pleasing; but, after all, if we want to know how people lived and dressed and conversed in the society that sat to Sir Joshua Reynolds or listened to the wisdom of Dr. Johnson, it is rather to Madame d'Arblay and Boswell and Horace Walpole that we should go than to the cleverest work of uncontemporary fiction. In 'Miss Angel' the author had not only to project herself into the manner of thought of a former century, which she achieved with considerable insight, but to attempt the still more difficult task of making the glaring improbabilities of attested 'facts' seem natural and possible. Few novelists would have dared to *invent* the story of Angelica Kauffmann's marriage to the sham de Horn; none assuredly could have made it convincing.

If human relations are depicted honestly and faithfully, and if, in addition, the characters which illustrate them are made to live for us, it matters very little what clothes they wear. The ladies of the day when Anne Thackeray wrote most of her tales wore a costume as archaic to the present generation as Angelica's powder and patches and rosebud-sprinkled brocade, but their loves and sorrows were not essentially unlike those of their granddaughters, and that is why, when they are depicted for us by the hand of genius, they can never seem old-fashioned. As far as the eternal themes are concerned, the deliberate setting of a story in a still remoter past need not make it less real and stirring; but in its secondary aspect of a document of manners, the fact that its inessential trappings are painted by an eye-witness must always, other things being equal, give a book like 'Old Kensington' or 'Mrs. Dymond' an advantage over 'Miss Angel.'

'Mrs. Dymond' was its author's last attempt at a long novel. Much of it is very fine and human. The sense of hopelessness which the fact of her loving her odious husband imparts to the tragedy of poor Mary Marney could not be more poignantly rendered; and there is no figure in all the author's gallery nearer to our heart than Madame du Parc, who because of her Scottish extraction was bound to talk a more broken English than if she had been genuinely French; but the red flame of the Paris 'Commune' is hardly the subject for our artist's delicate brush. She had not more vermilion in her colour-box than would make a poppy glow in the corn, or light up the feather on poor Miss George's fatally

becoming hat. I have said before of 'Old Kensington' that the large canvas is not that with which her methods could most successfully cope. For the short story, or tales of the length of 'Elizabeth,' they were ideal. There is much that I should like to say about her short stories, especially the charming two volumes that she founded on the old fairy tales; but lured by the temptation to quote where every page contains something beautiful and illustrative, I have left myself no room to do more than refer ever so passingly to the volumes of biography, criticism, and enchanting reminiscence that form the harvest of her later years, and contain some of her most characteristic work.

In her delightful 'Book of Sibyls' she says of Miss Edgeworth: 'Every description one reads by her of actual things and people makes one wish that she had written more of them. . . .'

Robert Louis Stevenson, reading this book, as he cruised in his exotic seas, was filled with the same wish about herself.

'S.S. Lübeck.

'BETWEEN APIA AND SYDNEY.

'DEAR MRS. RITCHIE,—Do you remember a lean youth who used to hang daily around Leslie Stephen? I am that—I mean I am all that remains of that youth, and have just been startled into boyish joy, and diverted from the path of duty (answering eight months' accumulated correspondence) by your book of Sibyls. *I want more.* I am fond of making studies myself; and rather plume myself on my talent in that way; my method is the exact opposite of yours; I never see why you lay on one touch rather than another, I cannot see why you make your breaks, all your craft is magic and mystery in my matter-of-fact eyes; but the result is indeed exquisite, and in your small volume I have made a host of friends. I beg of you to give me more: a second volume: Joanna Baillie, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Inchbald, and (please) Mrs. Radcliffe. My wife (in a state of delight almost equal to mine) joins me in my pleading. Show us these faces, let us hear these voices, also, and make some happy hours for

'Your admirer,

'ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

'Or must you be wooed in verse?

'The faces and the forms of yore,
Again recall, again recast;
Let your fine fingers raise once more
The curtains of the quiet past;

And then, beside the English fires
 That sang and sparkled long ago,
 The sires of our departed sires,
 The mothers of our mothers, show.

‘R. L. S.’

VII.

There must be few of her readers who have not felt Stevenson's desire for more. We think of her with just a novel or two, a few short stories, a handful of scattered papers to her credit. Yet small as her output seems compared with the literary families of the more prolific, when we reflect that she wrote always at the cost of innumerable headaches, the fact that she published, first and last, some fifteen volumes, not counting the prefaces to the biographical edition of her father's works, handsomely acquits her of idleness. Many people have produced less in quantity with nothing like her quality to show in extenuation.

Nowhere is she more truly and tenderly herself than in commemorating her sisters of the pen, and none of these tributes is more feeling and noble in tone than that which she dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Gaskell. I cannot deny myself two quotations from it, because they might have been written word for word about herself.

‘The voice seemed almost present once again . . . a delicate enunciation singularly clear and cultivated, a harmonious note, moved by a laugh now and then, and restrained by a certain shyness, that shyness which belongs to sensitive people, who feel what others are feeling almost too quickly, and are at times suddenly hindered by the vibration. . . .’

To any that ever heard Lady Ritchie talk, her own voice also ‘seems almost present once again’ as we read these lines she wrote of another.

Mentioning how Mrs. Gaskell died within two years of Thackeray, and at about the same age, she adds :

‘He “laid the weary pen aside” ; but she did not seem weary. She was at work and at play almost to the last, living her full life with all its cares and joys. . . .’

Of her who outlived them both so long, and reached an age at which weariness might have seemed so natural and pardonable, what word could be more truly spoken than that ?

Quite, quite at the end she said : ' I could almost scream when I think of my long happy life, and all the dear people I have known.'

Every line of these later books brings home to me with a pang how the only hand that could have dealt adequately with my subject has laid down its pen. Precisely what one longs for are those illuminating flashes by which again and again she fixed for those who come after some lightning vision of the great dead.

Something of the service we would fain ask of her she does unconsciously perform. Not only do some of the things she says of others fit her own case with curious exactness, but she could not paint her vivid life-like sketches without giving incidentally a very good idea of the observant eye, the quick intelligence, that caught exactly the right impression, the sure cunning hand that conveyed it so unerringly to her readers.

No words of mine, however carefully chosen, could so fittingly close this paper as one last quotation from her ' Jane Austen ' :

' And so now and then in our lives, when we learn to love a sweet and noble character, we all feel happier and better for the goodness and charity which is not ours, but which seems to belong to us while we are near it. Just as some people and states of mind affect us uncomfortably, so we seem to be true to ourselves with a truthful person, generous-minded with a generous nature ; life seems less disappointing and self-seeking when we think of the just and sweet and unselfish spirits moving untroubled among dinning and distracting influences. These are our friends in the best and noblest sense. We are the happier for their existence ; it is so much gain to us. They may have lived at some distant time, we may never have met face to face, or we may have known them, and been blessed by their love ; but their light shines afar, their life is for us and with us in its generous example ; their song is for our ears, and we hear it and love it still, though the singer may be lying dead. . . . '

HOWARD OVERING STURGIS.

BOLSHEVISM.

BOLSHEVISM has now been in existence as a ruling power for two years. So long a period ought to have been enough to show to the world its true character, and yet there are still people who profess to regard it with awe as a great light-bringing movement. Some have compared it with the most splendid revelations of humanity—to Christianity itself. With Bolshevism, we are told, a new era has dawned for mankind, a new milestone has been reached, a new corner turned in the long road of progress, and we see opening out before us a land flowing with the milk and honey of Bolshevik promises, where the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and universal Peace shall reign. All stories of atrocities are dismissed as inventions of the enemy, and the Bolsheviks are represented as creatures much too bright and good for human nature's daily food. Lest any of my readers should think I am exaggerating, I put before them the following picture of a Bolshevik from an American writer :

'A part of the public leaned to this handy conclusion that the Bolshevik was a *sans culotte* and was about to begin a Reign of Terror. This was all wrong: the Bolshevik was no *sans culotte* and nothing could have been further from his most cherished notions than a Reign of Terror. He was a dreamer—a dreamer of pleasant kindly agreeable dreams that in another age of the earth's story may not be dreams at all but the corner-stone of society. And what was to overthrow the existing social system? the torch and axe? Not at all. No violence. The proletariat of the world was to march once round the walls of Jericho blowing a tin horn, when down would go the walls, joy follow, and oppression vanish.'¹

Rhys Williams has a similar high-falutin' passage in his 'Questions and Answers about Russia':

'I have known a good many idealists. I know the "uplifters" and social workers. I know our general line of Socialist idealists, and so forth. But I never met a band of men—I often try to correct myself and be honest because it is so easy to be inanely partisan—I never met a set of men who made me feel unclean—absolutely unclean, as that group did over there, as I met them in action.'

¹ C. E. Russell, *Unchained Russia*.

I propose in this article to set over against one another the Bolshevik as conceived by Messrs. Russell and Williams, and the Bolshevik as portrayed by the Bolsheviks themselves, by Lenin and his chief assistants.

Bolshevism is no new thing. It has been preached for more than half a generation. Lenin has been a prolific writer, and I shall go back chiefly to the books he published in and after 1905 as a consequence of the first Russian Revolution. I go back so far in order to prove that point for point the whole course of the Bolshevik revolution was laid down by Lenin, that even developments still to come have been foreseen by him, and the horrors attending the movement, its massacres and its unparalleled cruelty, cannot be regarded as the spontaneous outbreak of an infuriated and temporarily undisciplined mob; on the contrary, twelve years before the Revolution began, Lenin anticipated them, and deliberately recommended them, as the best instrument for accomplishing his purpose.

Lenin, like all other Russian Socialists that count for anything, is a follower of Marx and Engels. Their Communistic Manifesto is the foundation of his belief. Marxism is the touchstone by which he tries the creeds of other men. For instance, Lenin affects to regard Ramsay Macdonald with pity because he is not a Marxist. But it would be a vain thing to try and find out what Lenin's aims are simply by a study of Marx. Lenin is far too big a man to make a bugbear of consistency, and his interpretations of the doctrines he has enunciated, and the promises he has scattered about him so profusely during his career, are extremely generous and broad-minded. His favourite saying is: 'There is no abstract truth, truth is always concrete.' Nothing would be easier than to prove that Lenin was not a Marxist at all. Plekhanov and the other rivals of Lenin in Russia have done so a thousand times. The Anti-Bolshevik section of the Social-Democrat party calls itself with emphasis the Marxist Social Democrat faction. If we leave Marxism on one side and recognise that Lenin will never be bound by the words of a master or even by any words of his own, where are we to find a formula that will express his aim? I believe that he himself would most prefer the noble words he uses in his newspaper *Vpered*: 'the deliverance of humanity from every form of oppression and from the exploitation of man by man.' *Prave orts, prave orts*. We shall see how near he comes to the spirit of them.

The roots of Leninism go deeper than Marxism. Behind his political theory there is a philosophy of life and morals. Lenin does not often speak of these more intimate questions. It is extremely important, however, to note what he has to say about them, because his attitude towards the fundamental problems of morality and religion goes far to explain the peculiar character of Bolshevism. In the *Proletarii* Lenin for once draws aside the veil and declares that Marxism is Materialism and glorifies it as such. He gravely discusses whether a Christian may become a Bolshevik, and decides that is permissible, but, of course, he must be taught the error of his ways. In *Vperiod* on the other hand he says,

‘We shall never allow such an absurdity as a Social-Democratic Christian. We shall not shut the mouth of the Christian preacher, nor on the other hand shall we shut the mouth of the preacher of Materialism, our splendid philosophy of life, which is free from the corruptions of thousands of years.’

Christianity, he says, is the ideology of the oppressor, it is the weapon of exploitation. Just as the Vampire was fabled to make its victims go off into a dream before it sucked their blood, so Christianity serves to drowse the brains of the victims of Capitalism. We are far from making it a reproach to Lenin that he is not a Christian. The Monarchists professed Christianity as ostentatiously as Lenin rejects it; is any Christian proud of the fact?

Lenin, of course, gives us no system of morality. We repeat his favourite saying: ‘There is no abstract truth: truth is always concrete.’ We can only infer his morality from his discussions of particular cases. The most illuminating of these is the discussion in *Proletarii* on the question: Is War a catastrophe? He says there is no such thing for the Social Democrat as an absolute catastrophe, just as there is no absolute good and no absolute truth. Higher than the interests of the personality come the interests of the class.

Apparently, higher you cannot go.

And if a given war serves the interest of the proletariat as a class, if it frees it from part of its chains, and gives it freedom to fight and develop, then such a war is a progressive one, independent of the sufferings and sacrifices it may cause. It is true that Lenin is speaking of the Russo-Japanese war, but he adds: ‘The Revolu-

tion is civil war, it is war too, and the sentimental-ethical point of view about a revolution is shared by no Socialist.' The man who puts the interests of a class as the highest good, who rejects the 'sentimental-ethical' point of view and welcomes war if only it promotes the interests of his particular class, is far from Mr. Russell's picture of a good-natured dreamer blowing his trumpets. We are getting nearer the *sans culotte*. In his 'Two Tactics' he says that great questions in the life of nations are decided only by force. Again, in another passage, he glorifies the Soviets of 1905 in that they acted as organs of power, above and outside all laws and norms whatever. They acknowledged no other power and no other norm. A power unlimited, outside the law, resting on force in the direct meaning of the word, that is the dictatorship. It is true that he says that the power on which it rests is not that of bayonets or money or ancient institutions, it is the mass of the people. But again the language of the passage shows how little Lenin would be restrained by 'sentimental-ethical' considerations in using the power that the people gave him.

We can now understand the difference between him and the Mensheviks and other Socialists. The former wished to remake the State gradually, by working with the bourgeois parties, and proceeding, somewhat in the English fashion, from reform to reform. In his 'Two Tactics' Lenin laughs at the Mensheviks as Girondists, as people who want to do things gently, politely, amiably. The Bolsheviks, he says, are the Jacobins of contemporary Socialism, and they wish the nation, *i.e.* the proletariat and the peasantry, to settle with the monarchy and the aristocracy in the plebeian way, 'ruthlessly' exterminating the enemies of freedom, crushing their opposition by force, not granting any concessions to the accursed brood of serfdom, the Asiatics, the outrage upon mankind, who were ruling Russia. He guards himself here by saying that he does not recommend an exact imitation of the Jacobin tactics of the French Revolution. But the use of the word *ruthless* is characteristic of Lenin in all these discussions of the right method to be followed. After his Revolution was consummated, he used it in his speeches as a direct spur to murder and civil war. Did *ruthless* mean one thing in 1905 and something else in 1917? From the beginning he says, 'Let ruthless war decide the choice of ways. We shall show ourselves traitors to the revolution, if we do not make use of the energy of the masses and their enthusiasm for remorseless and unrestrained fighting.'

The exact meaning of all this is made clearer by some articles in his newspaper *Vperiod*. He returns to the idea that the Bolsheviks are to the Mensheviks as the Jacobins to the Girondists. He then goes on to speak of the methods that a Bolshevik ought to use. Political murders, the assassination of individuals, he holds to be a mistake. It was the favourite method of the Socialist-Revolutionary party, and Lenin condemns it, not on moral grounds, but because it leads to nothing. But mass terrorism, mass murders—there is something great and inspiring! Terrorism with the mass of the people behind it, that is his aim. The removal of the most harmful persons in power at the time of open mass warfare—this is the most legal form of war, and only that man can confuse it with the terrorism of private assassination who is hopelessly unable to understand the tasks of a real live revolution. He exclaims, 'May the fusion of revolutionary terrorism and mass movements develop and strengthen, may the mass quickly advance to terroristic methods of warfare with all possible weapons!'

It is the more necessary to emphasise all this, as there is a number of people still ready to assure us that the Bolshevik looks upon bloodshed with aversion. I have waded through all the pamphlets published by the Bolsheviks in England, and time and again I came upon the assertion that terror is one part of their programme. I have shown that Lenin preached it twelve years before the Revolution began. There is no excuse whatever for Bolshevik apologists who conceal these facts. Even if they have not read all the obscure pamphlets Lenin has published, they ought to have read his public utterances since he came into power. From the moment that Kerenski was overturned the Bolshevik press and Bolshevik speeches repeated with damnable iteration the three phrases: 'The Red Terror,' 'Ruthless War!': 'The bourgeoisie must be swept from the face of the earth!' This means that as soon as Lenin felt himself firmly seated, he deliberately instigated his followers to mass murder. And even before his Revolution, his newspaper *Pravda* was preaching murder.

I particularly remember one cartoon that appeared in *Pravda*. It showed the ghosts of beheaded monarchs, such as Charles I. and Louis XVI. appearing to Nicholas II., and it bore a legend to this effect, 'These have been killed, why should Nicholas keep his head?' In the magazine the Bolsheviks provided at Irkutsk for the prisoners of war whom they hoped to bring over to their party, occurs the sentence: 'Our flag is red because it must be dipped in the blood

of the bourgeoisie.' Lenin is still preaching ruthless tactics. The Siberian papers some months ago were quoting a pronouncement that Lenin had issued against Kautski (it might have been a speech, but I think it was a pamphlet). In this Lenin explains that it is not enough to give the proletariat equal privileges with the bourgeoisie. The latter being better educated, more used to power, inheriting also finer traditions, are sure to prove themselves superior to the proletariat in every contest for great positions in the State. You can only make the proletariat safe by destroying the bourgeoisie. I am loth to quote a man's words from the newspapers of his opponents; I know it is not safe, but I do so with a special purpose. The English Bolsheviks are translating a great deal of material just now. I challenge them to put before the public the controversy between Lenin and Kautski, and to publish, without suppressing or altering a single word, the whole of Lenin's answer or answers to Kautski. And if there is any doubt about Lenin, there is none about Bukharin. In a pamphlet on Communism, issued for the benefit of the German workers, he says: 'When the German workers secure the victory, they would do well to hang Scheidemann with Wilhelm on the same gallows. There are also a number of similar gentry in France, in England, and in other countries.' So much for our harmless blowers of tin trumpets, the good men who make Mr. Williams feel so unclean.

The Bolsheviks thus proposed to wade through slaughter to a throne—but for what purpose? In order to establish the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'? The Bolsheviks frankly accept this phrase with all its implications. The dictatorship, they have told us again and again, is a form of government resting on force and force alone, 'ruthlessly' crushing its opponents. And they accept the word 'proletariat,' a term that excludes the peasantry as well as the bourgeoisie. They intend forcibly to impose the will of the minority on the majority. The proletariat does not compose more than fifteen per cent. of the Russian people, and yet, theoretically, it has equal voting power in the Soviets with the peasantry. Practically it has far more. Lenin laughs at democracy and scorns the word. All this is true and much more, but it is only fair to the Bolsheviks to state that they regard the dictatorship of the proletariat as a passing phase, as the means of bringing about the great day when 'humanity shall be freed from every form of oppression and the exploitation of man by man shall cease.' The dictatorship of the proletariat is a corridor, out of which the State

will pass into full freedom without the subjection of class to class or man to man. My only objection to the Bolsheviks here is that they have never really put their theories into practice. The State that they wish to create can only be built up by the people themselves working freely and unhindered in their own way. If the Bolsheviks could only have the courage of their convictions, there would be some hope for Russia. But the proletariat is never allowed to dictate to Lenin, it is Lenin who dictates to the proletariat. The elections to the Soviet are 'made' as shamelessly in Russia as in bourgeois France. And it is just because Lenin will never allow the proletariat or the peasantry to assume a dictatorship, that he and his party will go the way of Nicholas II. What the dictatorship of the Bolsheviks really means, I wish to illustrate from two instances—their relations to the workmen and to the peasants.

To take a test case with the working men, both Lenin and Trotsky have declared their intention of introducing the Taylor system into the Russian factories. To the horrified protests which have been showered upon them, they have one stereotyped answer: 'Yes, the Taylor system is horrid, when you are working for a capitalist, and the proceeds of your labour go to him. But it is a great thing when you are working for the State, that is quite different.' Poor deluded sons of Adam! The Taylor system is the most brutal and soul-killing slavery ever devised by the mind of man. Does anybody imagine that the Bolsheviks will ever make this system general in Russia by 'constitutional' means—by allowing the people freely to express their opinions through the Soviets? If this system becomes general in Russia, it will only be through 'ruthless' methods. But a 'ruthless' dictator is not the man who can rule the working classes nowadays. He has passed, we hope, for ever. The spirit aroused by the Revolution itself has made him impossible. There are many signs that the working men are already tired of the Bolshevik methods. A body of them went to a certain commissar and complained: 'Our master receives us politely when we go to him, and he listens to what we have to say, and is kind to us. But when we come to you, you keep us waiting and pay no attention to our complaints.' Working men are rescuing their old masters out of the hands of the Soviets, because they prefer to work with them. All signs point to the conclusion that if there were really a dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, the present commissars would have to go.

The peasant question is admitted by everybody to be the most difficult one that faces the Bolsheviks. Lenin has always written about it with extraordinary frankness. If only the Russian peasants could read, there would be an end of Lenin. At the first the peasants will support the revolution, says Lenin, because they want the land. But once they have got the land, they will be against us. We are for the abolition of private property. We are against hired labour—against one man working for another. In the *Proletarii* Lenin says that the Bolsheviks do not promise any harmony or any equality from the first successes of the revolution; on the contrary they promise a new struggle, a new inequality, a new revolution. Radek, Bukharin, Trotski, all speak in the same strain. The bitterest struggle of all is to come when the proletariat tries to bend the peasantry to its will. Trotski, in 'War and Revolution,' says that, in the first stages of the revolution, the peasantry will be on the side of the proletariat.

'On the other hand the peasantry can never oust the proletariat, because the history of capitalism is the history of the subordination of the village to the city. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry is impossible, as the peasantry can never form a powerful party of its own.'

The Bolsheviks intended to allow the peasants to seize their land. Then, in order to weaken them as a class, they intended to organise the rural proletariat, i.e. the poorest peasants, against those who already held land, and, by keeping the peasantry divided against itself, to subjugate it and in the end appropriate all the land for the State. The ultimate aim I give in Bukharin's own words:

'In agriculture as in industry it is best for production to be on a large scale. In large undertakings good agricultural instruments can be used, material economised, the work itself arranged according to one plan, every labourer put in his place, above all, accounts accurately kept, thus preventing waste of material or labour. Our task is not all to see that every labourer should grub about on his corner of land like a beetle in a heap of dung, but the poor peasants should go over to common work on the largest possible scale.'¹

What a prospect! Every labourer to be put in his place!

¹ *Das Programm der Kommunisten.*

By whom? Under what penalties? Well might the Bolsheviks anticipate the bitterest of all fights before this was possible.

Fortunately the passive resistance of the peasant seems already to have broken up these plans. At first everything went according to programme. The Soviet of Workers and Peasants was renamed the Soviet of Workers and the *poorest* Peasants. As Lenin had clearly foreseen, the bulk of the peasants turned against the Soviets. Birukoff in his book the 'New Russia' admits that the attempt to base a policy on the poor peasants was unsuccessful. The Bolsheviks dissolved their Poverty Committees and in Birukoff's words 'formed new Soviets' from the moderately well-to-do element. Delightful phrase, 'formed new Soviets'! It gives the Bolshevik case away so completely. It shows the Bolsheviks enfranchising just from that class that is likely to support them, and disfranchising those who are of no use to them. It shows the completely artificial character of the Bolshevik Soviet movement, and that the Soviets under Bolshevism are something imposed by the clique that happens to be at the head of affairs and not an institution that is being developed by the people itself. The problem, however, is not solved by the formation of new Soviets. If Lenin ever conquers his external enemies and gets his hands free to deal with the moderately well-to-do peasants, they will have another chance to appreciate the qualities of his Jacobinism. Nothing shows so clearly the essential brutality of Bolshevism as does their land policy. An overwhelming majority of the Russians are peasants. The Bolsheviks have declared in so many words that they are ready by all the means in their power to force this majority to live in submission to the comparatively insignificant minority of the urban proletariat. They have no illusions as to the difficulty of the task, they have said that it will be the bitterest fight of all and will need the most 'ruthless' measures. And what now of Lenin's fine words about freeing humanity from every kind of oppression? To free the peasants from one bondage and to hand them over to the Bolsheviks, is it not driving out Satan by Beelzebub?

In this article I have tried to represent Bolshevism as the Bolsheviks themselves imagine it. Let it be remembered that the chief difference between the Bolsheviks and their Socialist opponents is one of tactics. All that was constructive in their programme would be approved of by other Socialists. We may well ask, what have these tactics brought Russia? The Bolsheviks protest that Russia, exhausted by war and revolution, is not a fair

example of what they can do. On the contrary we assert that the present state of Russia is an excellent example of what Bolshevism leads to. There is not a single disaster that has now overtaken Russia that is not the direct outcome of some phase or other of their fantastic policy. Soviet Russia is now carrying on half a dozen little wars from Finland to Vladivostock. Each of these wars is due to some blunder in Bolshevik policy. Russian trade and manufactures are at a standstill—as the result of Bolshevik wars. Famine has slain its millions in Russia—as the result of the Bolshevik niggardliness to the peasants. And now having killed so many who are indispensable and destroyed so much that is irreplaceable, how far have they got and what work of lasting value have they performed? They boast of great reforms in home affairs. They claim credit for having founded ten universities in two years. Ten universities in two years! Why, not even Germany could do that. A university is not made, it is born, and it takes a long, long time to come into being. They have established what are called in Russia ‘people’s universities,’ i.e. lecture courses something like our University Extension Lectures, but of a far lower standard. Meanwhile, real University life in Russia has practically perished, and, as anybody can see from Mr. Ransome’s book, even in the schools very little was done last winter because of the difficulty of heating them. And if on the other hand we turn to the work of the opponents of the Bolsheviks in Siberia, we see real progress being made. New University institutions founded at Irkutsk, Harbin, Vladivostock, where real scholarly work is done by professors banished from Russia by the Red Terror. All over Siberia schools are being founded wherever the money can be found for them. The Zemstvos, which, unlike the Bolshevik Soviets, are free organs of public opinion, are carrying on the great work of education with all the more zeal just because they are in such intimate connection with the people. It is true that the English Pro-Bolsheviks are spreading the report that Koltchak suppresses Zemstvos, but that is, to quote Viscount Grey, a first-rate lie. It is the Bolsheviks who suppress Zemstvos. And similarly, if we take all the internal reforms of which the Bolsheviks boast, we shall scarcely find one which would not have been introduced without their tactics of ‘ruthless’ warfare. Let us never forget that the Constituent Assembly, which Lenin ‘ruthlessly’ dispersed, was so overwhelmingly Socialistic that it would never have been captured by the capitalists, and that everything of permanent value that the Bolsheviks have done would have been

done equally well through the Assembly, and without the awful waste of human life which the Bolsheviks deliberately planned. And more than that, the Bo'sheviks have deliberately ruined the most valuable contribution made by the Russian Revolutionists to the practice of government. Before the Bolsheviks came into power, the Soviets were free instruments of the working-class opinion, their franchise was the widest ever conceived or realised in actual life. But the Bolsheviks have made the Soviets of less importance and value than the Duma was under the Czar. The principle of the Soviets deserves careful study, it is probably the most fruitful idea in recent political thought, but the 'ruthlessness' with which the Bolsheviks have used it, has discredited it all over the world. Those who value the Soviets must pray for the speedy departure of the Bolsheviks.

England is rapidly approaching a condition similar to that which made the Bolshevik Republic possible. Prices are rising, food and manufactured articles are scarce, repeated strikes are increasing the difficulties of supplying the market with the goods that are needed. It is certain that the English Bolsheviks will follow the example of their Russian brethren and employ every conceivable means to aggravate the distresses of the poor. The same lies and the same promises will be strewn broadcast here as in Russia. A campaign against Conscription is already in full swing—and when the Bolsheviks come into power, a National Militia will be formed from which nobody will escape. The new conscript will be called upon to fight not only his fellow-citizen at home, but to take part on the Bolshevik side in every revolution all over the world from China to Peru. The Bolsheviks agitated against the death-sentence in the army, and then when their turn came re-introduced it, not only for the erring soldier, but also for his wife and family. It is important that the English soldier should make quite clear to himself what Bolshevik discipline means. The labourer will be promised control of his destiny, and be assured that, in rising, he has nothing to lose but his chains. He will rise and help to establish the great Bolshevik Republic, only to find that he has exchanged one slavery for another, and that this time he is in the grip of a system, the avowed object of which is to put every man in his place and to keep him there. New Bolshevik is but old Czar writ large.

HEREWARD T. PRICE.

A PLEA FOR OLD-AGE HOMES.

BY EDITH SELLERS.

I ONCE found an old man and woman sitting quietly, side by side, just waiting for the end to come. Starvation was written on their faces in unmistakable terms; already, indeed, there was that odd bright look in their eyes that always tells its own tale.

They had been living for months, the two of them, on six shillings a week; and out of that six shillings they had had to pay three and sixpence a week in rent; to spend sixpence, too, on fires, lights, and soap. Thus a shilling a week each—that is, less than a penny three farthings a day—is all that they had had wherewith to buy food; and let one strive as one will to pinch and save, the grim wolf cannot very long be held at bay on a shilling a week. They were face to face with death when I saw them that morning, and they knew it. They had known it, indeed, for days. None the less, so far as I could make out, they had never told any living creature that they were even on short commons. When, later, I asked them why they had not applied to the relieving officer for help, they seemed surprised at my lack of understanding.

‘We did think sometimes of going to him,’ the old woman replied gently, ‘but we really could not; for, if we had, he might have sent us to the workhouse; and——’ She paused for a moment and then added, in a whisper: ‘We talked it all over, you see, and we had quite made up our minds, that we would rather die quietly here than go to the workhouse.’

It was a clear case of attempted suicide, and merited condemnation of course. But what could I say? For as I looked at this poor old woman, I thought of another poor old woman who had gone to the workhouse, and of the reply she had given when asked why she had gone. ‘I had to choose between the workhouse and starvation,’ she said, ‘and—well—I chose badly.’

Some two years later this old couple had ten shillings a week on which to live,—none the less they had to go to the workhouse. They were taken there by force. For they had become too feeble to live alone; and their daughter, who had promised to make a home for them in return for their ten shillings, had tired of the work. She really could not afford to have them with her, she said; for she was a lone widow, and not only did they cost her the full ten shillings, but they kept her the whole day at the wash-tub.

Besides, according to her, 'One can't have old folk under one's feet, day in and day out. They just get on one's nerves.' So, in spite of their vehement protests, their entreaties and tears, she bundled them off to the Union.

I was out of England at the time; but a week later, as it chanced, I returned; and I went at once to see them. The old woman was dying, dying because she was in the workhouse. She had lain in bed the whole seven days she had been there, just eating out her very heart with shame that she was there. Never shall I forget the cry she raised when she saw me.

'Oh! Miss, don't tell them I'm here. Promise me you'll never let anyone know that I came to the workhouse.' The thought of her old friends and neighbours ever hearing where she was, was evidently more than she could bear.

She died the next day; and her husband would also have died had he not forthwith been removed from the workhouse.

Within six months he was there again, however, his daughter-in-law having brought him back, because she had found that, week by week, he cost her more than his five shillings. Then his granddaughter took charge of him, for he fretted too sorely to be left in the Union; but she could not keep him long, for she had her own living to earn; and he, with his five shillings, was a burden, not a help. Three times he was taken out of the workhouse, and three times he was brought back, because such of his relatives as could give him a home, in return for his five shillings a week, would not; and such as would, could not. The end of it was, he died in the workhouse, just as his wife had died.

Now these old people, although very worthy old people, were unreasonable of course. It was sheer perversity on their part, to fret and worry as they did just because they were in the workhouse. They ought, by all the rules, to have been quite happy there; and they would have been, no doubt, had they had common sense. For never in their lives before had they been so well housed, clothed, and fed, as there; never so well cared for. It was a model workhouse, one in which the aged inmates were surrounded with comforts. They were in the infirmary, too, where money was spent on them lavishly. This old man and woman who, in their own little home had never had more than fifteen shillings a week, on which to live and bring up their family, were there costing the ratepayers something like a pound a week each. Yet, in spite of all, they were miserable, more miserable than they had ever been before, even in that terrible week when they were just

waiting for the end to come. And with worthy old people it is almost always thus. They none of them seem to have common sense in what concerns the workhouse. If they have to go there, they are wretched, no matter how much money is wasted on trying to make them happy. 'Yes, we are very comfortable here,' an inmate of a quite luxurious workhouse once said to me. Then a wistful look came into her poor bewrinkled old face, and she added emphatically, 'But we are not happy at all.'

She had her reasons, of course, for not being happy. They all have their reasons, good or bad. To the average respectable old woman, who has spent her days in a little cottage, with only her own belongings, the mere fact of having to live in a huge room, with strangers around her, is undoubtedly a terrible trial. To have her meals at a long table, with official eyes watching her, is for her simply appalling. She would rather by far munch a crust of dry bread, well out of sight, than eat the most savoury of pottages in public. Then, even at seventy, freedom is sweet, and in the workhouse one is at the beck and nod of every official, bound to do what one is told to do; and that, as a rule, means do nothing. In her own cottage an old woman has always something to do, something to think of, to plan, and it gives a zest to life; but in the workhouse she must just sit with her hands before her, the whole day long, waiting for a bell to ring. This, in itself, spells misery; and there is something much worse than this. Between a workhouse inmate and even the poorest of the respectable poor, there is socially a great gulf, it must be remembered; for in the workhouse all are paupers alike, whether they have old-age pensions or not. Once there she has the criminal, the vicious, and the degraded around her, night and day; and officially she ranks with them. She feels herself an outcast, therefore, a disgrace to those for whom she cares; and this, more than anything else, is an insuperable bar to her ever being happy, even in the best of workhouses, or her ever going there unless she is forced.

I hear sometimes of old men and women who are in the workhouse through choice; but I almost never come across them, unless, indeed, they be either sorely afflicted or quite worthless. Among all the inmates whom I have known, and their name is legion, there are only three respectable old women who went to the workhouse of their own free will, and remained there, although physically able to leave, and each with another home to go to. The first of the three went there because she had discovered that, by living with her son, she was preventing him from getting married; the

second, because she knew that her daughter with whom she was living was starving herself to death to give her bread; and the third, a Scotchwoman, because she could not agree in matters theological with her son whose house she was keeping. Apart from these three, all the workhouse inmates I have ever met with, who were even fairly respectable, were unwilling inmates, and were more or less miserable. They were where they were, either because they needed skilled nursing, or because they had nowhere else where they could be, had no one to make a home for them, and could not make a home themselves, even such of them as were old-age pensioners.

Practically it is impossible for anyone above seventy to make a decent home for himself—or herself—on 7s. 6d. a week, or even on 10s. Unless a home can be found for him, he must go to the workhouse. And it is only those who have tried who know how hard it is to find homes for the aged, even with their own relations, if all that they have is their old-age pensions. Before the Pension Law came into force, I sifted and sorted some 1200 old workhouse inmates that I might discover how many of them would have homes to go to, when they became old-age pensioners; and, out of the whole 1200, only 23 had even a fairly good chance of a home when that time came. And I doubt whether I should find even twenty-three, now that the War has bereaved so many old people of those on whom they relied for support.

'I can't abear old men about, and I'm bothered enough as it is,' a woman once told me, when I tried to persuade her to play the caretaker to her husband's father. 'I've a sight more to do than I can,' another replied, when I suggested to her that she might take in her own father; another again waxed quite righteously indignant, when I ventured to enquire if she would make a home for her mother, 'For five shillings a week! indeed I won't!' she cried angrily. 'Why! she would cost me more than that, and all the trouble besides.' And that was in pre-War days, when 5s. went as far as 10s. goes now.

These women were of the worthless sort, of course. They and such as they, are, however, the few, not the many. The great majority of the sons and daughters whom I have at one time or another asked to take in an old-age pensioner mother or father, would have said 'Yes' gladly, if they could, I feel sure. But with the best will in the world, they could not; the thing was impossible. Sometimes it was the husband who barred the way, sometimes it was the wife; but more often than either it was poverty. 'We'd

love to have her with us, but we really can't afford it,' I have often been told. 'What with fires and washing she 'ud cost us more than she 'ud bring, and it is a hard pinch for us as it is.' Most often of all, however, it was lack of room. Houses are hard to find in this our day and rents are terribly high, so high that it is sheer mockery to suggest to the average unskilled labourer, that he should take an extra room, even for his own mother, if all that she has wherewith to pay for everything is her pension. And a spare room he has never, by any chance, not even the tiniest of attics. 'Why, we are packed like herrings already,' is an answer I have more than once received, when I have asked near relatives to take in an old man or woman. 'There are ten of us here as it is, and we have only two rooms,' they would say; or, 'How could an old woman live here?' they would ask. 'She would never get up them stairs alive!'

Then, if it is hard to find homes for old-age pensioners with their own belongings, when these belongings are not well-paid artisans but unskilled labourers, it is of course much harder to find them with outsiders; that, indeed, in towns is practically impossible. No woman is willing for 7s. 6d. a week to house, feed and tend anyone above seventy, who is not of her own kith and kin. If she has no conscience, she may undertake to do it; but she will not do it; it would not pay her to do it. As her charge would cost her, if properly cared for, every penny she would receive with him, she would have nothing in return for all the work he caused her, all the worry, the anxiety; and even respectable old-age pensioners are by no means always pleasant house-mates. When too infirm to live alone, the poor are therefore just as certain to go to the workhouse, now that they have old-age pensions, as they were in the days when they had out-relief, unless, indeed, they have relatives with whom they can live. And among the very poor—the unskilled labour class—nearly ninety-nine out of every hundred have no relatives with whom they can live, after they are seventy. For them, therefore, the Old-Age Pension Law is something very like a fraud; they are not one whit better off now that it is in force, than they were before it was passed. In one respect, indeed, they are worse off now than they were then; for, whereas then they were regarded as deserving objects of charity, and often received presents, now but few of them have even a Christmas box. For, as it is known that they, as old-age pensioners, are collectively costing the nation many millions a year, it is taken for granted that individually they are well provided for—much too well, indeed,

the stingy hold. And all the time these poor old folk, the alone-standing old-age pensioners (who are alone-standing, perhaps, because their sons and grandsons have been killed in the War) are living in misery, either in the workhouse, where life is a burden to them, or in some little tenement, where they are not only uncared for but half-starved, and have nothing but the workhouse to look forward to. And already, ten years ago, a Royal Commission decided that to let decent old people be in the workhouse was a disgrace to us all.

That the present state of things is hard on our old-age pensioners cannot be denied, nor can it be denied that it is hard, also, on the ratepayers; for in the workhouse every old-age pensioner, if a Londoner, costs the ratepayer not very far short of a pound a week. And what adds to the sting, the great misery on the one hand, and the great expense on the other, are alike unnecessary. For the pensioners—such of them at least as are respectable—might be lodged in old-age homes instead of in workhouses; and in well-managed homes, they would not only be comfortable, but, so far as in them lay, happy; and they would cost the ratepayers very much less than they cost them now.

I know very comfortable old-age homes in Norway, where, in pre-War days, the cost per head was only 6s. a week; in Switzerland, where it was 7s. 3d.; and in Denmark, where it was 7s. 6d. Even in Vienna, where, in normal times, the cost of living is as high as in London, the average cost per head, in quite charming homes, was under 9s. a week, before the War. And what there is in other countries, there might be here. Already, indeed, there are, at Whyteleafe, Eastbourne, and some few other places, old-age homes in which the inmates are well content, and with good reason; yet all that they cost before the War was, at Whyteleafe 8s. 8½d. a week each, and at Eastbourne, 8s. 6d. Had they been in London workhouses, at that time, they would each have cost 14s. 9½d. a week; and were they there now, they would be costing something like a pound.

Among all the old-age homes I know, and I know very many, there is not one in which the cost per head is so high as in the average English workhouse; and there are only four in which the standard of comfort is not very much higher. In one of them, indeed, the standard is so high—the inmates fare so well and seem so happy—that the late Sir Robert Giffen, after paying them a visit, exclaimed, with the ring of keen regret in his voice: 'We in England really could not afford to make our aged poor so com-

fortable as you make yours !' And the inmates of that cheery little home were costing only about half as much per head as the inmates of the most dismal workhouse in London. Thus we should actually effect savings all round, in money as well as in misery, were we to lodge our alone-standing old people in old-age homes, instead of in workhouses. That, indeed, the Royal Commission admitted, in the Report published ten years ago.

It is not by lavishing money on the respectable poor that they are made comfortable and happy in their old age. Of that we have proof ; for we lavish money on ours now, more money than any other nation, yet they are miserable. Electric-lighted palaces, with uniformed officials, do not appeal to them ; they would rather by far live in what we should, perhaps, call hovels. What their hearts are set on, and what, if they are Anglo-Saxons, they must have to be content, is each a little room which is their own private property, where they can lie down when they like, get up when they like, secure from inquisitive glances ; where they may have their own little treasures around them, see their friends every day if they choose, or be alone if such be their fancy. And the room must be in a house reserved exclusively for the respectable ; one that bars its doors inexorably against the disorderly and the disreputable, as well as against the whole ex-criminal tribe. This is a *sine qua non* ; for the worthy, if Anglo-Saxons—there are races with whom it is otherwise—cannot live happily side by side with the worthless. They always feel, let one say what one will to the contrary, that there is disgrace in sharing or dwelling with them.

They must also, if they are to be even fairly comfortable, be dealt with individually, as human beings, not as mere wheels in a huge machine. Their tastes must be studied, their prejudices must be humoured, and deference must be shown to their wishes. They must, in fact, be treated with respect, as worthy old people ought to be treated. Consideration must be shown to them, sympathy, too ; and they must be left, so far as possible, to live their own lives, go their own way. The mere fact that this is done in every decent old-age home and is not done in our workhouses, explains in a very great measure why respectable old people are so much happier in these homes than in workhouses, while costing their fellows much less. For studying, humouring, deference—showing costs nothing in money, although much in time and thought. Wherever the aged poor are lodged, it is the spirit in which the administration is carried on that determines their comfort, not the amount of money that is spent there.

I know an English workhouse where the old inmates are all hurried out of their beds at half-past six o'clock, even in winter, that the officials may have their breakfast in peace and comfort at the hour they like best. Now, nothing of that sort could possibly occur in Denmark or Austria. No Director would dare give his sanction to any arrangement under which the comfort of the aged was sacrificed to that of the officials; for, if he did, all classes would rise up in wrath and clamour for his dismissal. There, the first lesson an official has to learn, when appointed to an old-age home, is that he—or she—is there to make the inmates not only comfortable but happy. It is part of his regular duty to listen to them, sympathise with them, help them, and take care of them, while interfering with them as little as possible. He is there, in fact, as their servant; and he is sent away at once if he does not serve them well. For there, the old-age homes are regarded as the special property of the aged poor, the places where they have the right to be, so long as they demean themselves in a seemly fashion.

Large towns must, of course, have fairly large old-age homes. Still, the smaller they are the better, so far as the inmates are concerned. The very best I know, i.e. those in which the old people seem happiest, are quite small, either one house, just large enough to take in eight or ten inmates, or a row of little one-roomed cottages, with a larger cottage attached. And there are great advantages in making them small, as then every district can have either its own home, or it can share a home with a neighbouring district. Thus it is able to watch over the inmates, and see for itself that they are properly cared for; while they have their old friends within hail, and that means much to them. Nor is that all: in a small home, officialdom can safely be reduced to a minimum, and that spells saving all round. In that cheery little home that appealed so strongly to Sir Robert Giffen, out of every pound spent 18s. 2½d. was spent on the old people, and only 1s. 9½d. on the officials; whereas there are English workhouses, where, even before the war, 5s. out of the 14s. 9d. a week every inmate was costing went directly or indirectly to the officials.

In many very comfortable foreign old-age homes there are only two officials, an artisan and his wife; and the man receives no wages, only free board and lodging. He is expected to go out and earn wages during the day, and to give a helping hand to his wife at night. It is on the woman that the chief responsibility for the home rests. She is the matron, she is also the old people's

general manager, caretaker, and servant. She finds out what they wish to eat, buys it, and cooks it, waiting on them the while and watching that no harm befalls them. If they are strong enough, they keep their own rooms clean; if they are not, she cleans them for them. She, with the help of a maid-servant, or perhaps a charwoman, does everything for them, in fact, so long as they are fairly well. Then, when illness comes, she calls in a doctor and nurse. Meanwhile the inmates are all well clothed, well fed, and well cared for; and they are almost as free from interference as if they were in their own cottages. There are some few rules in force for the general comfort; and these must be kept, of course, and the doctor's orders must be obeyed. No inmate may go to a public house, solicit alms, or wander about outside when he ought to be in bed; nor may he be quarrelsome, or uproarious. If, in spite of due warning, he will persist in breaking these rules, the matron reports him to the Local Authorities, for the place is as a rule under their control; and he has to leave the home forthwith. So long, however, as he conducts himself properly, he is treated in all respects as a worthy citizen; and no one has the right to say him yea or nay.

Many of the foreign old-age homes are, of course, humble little places; still, humble little places are what most poor old people love best; they are the only places, indeed, in which they ever feel quite at home. Our alone-standing old-age pensioners would love them, had they the chance; would feel at home in them, too. And there is no reason why they should not be given the chance. On the contrary, economy and humanity alike demand that they should. Old-age homes ought undoubtedly to be provided for them, with all possible speed, for their own sake, and also for the sake of those whom they have lost in the War. Many of the old people who are now alone-standing, are alone-standing, we must not forget, because those who would have stood by them have been killed, killed fighting for them and for us. This is a fact which it behoves us all to bear well in mind when devising schemes for War Memorials. For, could our dead soldiers be asked how they would best like us to show our gratitude to them, their reply would be, I cannot but think: 'Show it by seeing to it that those whom we have left behind us are well cared for.' And in old-age homes their mothers and fathers, all their respectable belongings indeed, would if in need be well cared for, when too feeble to care for themselves. This in itself is a good reason, surely, why we should set to work forthwith to provide these homes.

PROPAGANDA BEHIND THE LINES.

BY MAJOR C. J. C. STREET.

It is almost to utter a platitude to say that war has lost its picturesqueness, had developed into a science, an elaborate game played by men in mud-stained khaki, crowned with steel hats painted with the strange discords of camouflage. The old panoply has vanished; bright coloured tunics, shining breast-plates. The very polished muzzles of the guns have given place to an universal neutral tint, shared alike by weapon and man.

Yet war has still its picturesque side—I remember one September dawn seen from an Observation Post that will remain with me as the most beautiful thing that I have seen—and, to counterbalance it, the most matter-of-fact, cold-blooded, calculating side, that very few have ever realised. For, to the actual business of physical maiming has been added the more subtle process of insidious slaughter of *morale*, a far more difficult, but none the less effective, method of warfare. The Germans have always preached it. They practised it from the first, 'frightfulness' being merely the clumsy German interpretation of the theory of the destruction of *morale*. Bernhardt lays as much stress upon it as upon perfection of manœuvre. The Allies, keener students of psychology, substituted persuasion for brutality, and developed a system of military propaganda that has never before been equalled.

It must be emphasised that the ultimate object of propaganda in war is the destruction of enemy *morale*, and its corollary, the strengthening of friendly *morale*. It consists of the dissemination of ideas, designed to react in different ways upon their various recipients. The enemy must be made to feel that his cause is hopeless from the start, has no chance of ultimate success, and is based upon delusive ideals. It is usually impossible to convince the responsible organisations of the hostile nation, such as the Government or the Army Commands, though it may be feasible to hamper them in their decisions. But it is comparatively easy to influence the rank and file, civilian as well as military, and to produce an atmosphere of despondency fatal to success.

In the same way, the general public of neutral nations must be supplied with the arguments of victory and of a just cause, followed by a judicious 'booming' of every success, great or

small, and by brilliant descriptions of the spirit that animates the Allied troops. The neutral, especially when weak and necessarily somewhat at the mercy of the side that eventually proves victorious, is naturally disposed to sit on the fence and lean towards the side that he imagines to be winning. And the importance of such neutral leanings can never be exaggerated after the experiences of the late war.

Finally, allied and friendly nations, even the belligerent nation itself, must be kept in good heart by emphasising the justice of their cause, the magnificent bearing of their troops, the demoralisation of the enemy. Reverses must be explained and shown to be but temporary, information of each success must be widely disseminated and its meaning made clear.

It is obvious that, so far as friendly, allied, and neutral nations are concerned, the Press must be the principal organ of propaganda. Press propaganda is a subject by itself, with which we need not now concern ourselves. But in the case of enemy countries, and the invaded districts on the friendly side, the Press is closed. The zone of fighting acts as a barrier behind which we cannot penetrate; if we are to develop propaganda behind this barrier we must seek more indirect methods. It is with some of these methods that the present article proposes to deal.

In the late war, practically the whole of Belgium and a very large and thickly populated portion of France were for four years in enemy occupation. The inhabitants of these territories had no means of communication with their friends; they were entirely subjected to enemy influences in every detail of their lives. The strictest precautions were taken to prevent news filtering through to them from other than enemy sources, while they were subjected to every possible method of sapping their nationality. One of the most obvious duties of the propaganda service was therefore to counteract this influence by the dissemination of the truth as to the Allied cause and its progress. It was a difficult problem, but a most successful solution was eventually found, and will be described later.

The main task of the Allied propagandist was, however, to produce depression and unrest in the enemy camp. It is not too much to say that the results of a well-directed propaganda preparation to an attack can be far greater than that of the most intense preliminary bombardment, given a receptive and easily influenced enemy. The most striking example of a successful

propaganda preparation was shown in the Italian collapse of 1917. It must be remembered that the hostile persuasion found a ready soil in which to take root. The Italian troops were worn out with the unending struggles on the Isonzo, and were disaffected by the economic troubles of their wives and families at home. In this soil the enemy sowed promises of an early and favourable peace, intermingled with menacing stories of the invincible armaments arrayed upon the Austrian side. Their defeat was due to their impressionable nature, but in justice be it said that this same nature was wholly responsible for their magnificent recovery.

The aim of propaganda behind the enemy lines is directly and indirectly to produce discouragement, in preparation of an attack by arms. And it must be emphasised that the farther the influence can be made to extend into the hostile country the better. To produce discouragement among the troops themselves is certainly the first step towards success, but this can rarely be effective if the country behind them supports them enthusiastically. A man is always more prone to listen to the encouragement of his friend than to the threats of his enemy. But once the civilian population be discouraged the infection travels rapidly to the troops. Experience has shown that nothing is more destructive to the *morale* of an army than a stream of despondent letters from friends and relatives at home.

But it would be less than logical to consider the forms of propaganda in enemy territory before those employed in the invaded districts. And of the latter, the most far-reaching was that unique periodical, *Le Courrier de l'Air*.

Early in 1916, the War Office realised the might of the moral weapon, and cast about to find the personnel wherewith to forge it. A branch of the Directorate of Military Intelligence was created; and known as M.I.7.b. An Army Order was issued, inviting those officers and men who had previous literary experience to communicate with the new organisation. As a result, a more or less regular staff of some thousand writers was enrolled, who, as an act of grace, consented to contribute the produce of their pens during such times as they could spare from more active military duties. From these were selected two or three who were unfit for service overseas, a number subsequently raised to twenty, who were attached to the staff of M.I.7.b., and gave their whole time to the production of propaganda. By this means the War

Office obtained the pick of the literary brains of the Service at no expense, for the officers devoting their whole time to this work would otherwise have been drawing their pay and kicking their heels at a Command Depot or elsewhere. It need hardly be added that their contributions, though published throughout the globe, were unpaid.

An early function of M.I.7.b. was the establishment of *Le Courier de l'Air*. The needs of the invaded districts had long been felt, and it was realised that a newspaper of Allied tendencies, aerially distributed, was the best way to meet that need. So, after much discussion, the first number of *The Courier*, as it came to be called, was produced, in the form of a single sheet, some eight inches by six. It was a memorable production, destined to be the first regular aerial newspaper of the world. It bears the date of April 6, 1917, and carries in its leading column an exhortation that most admirably sets out its aims and scope. *A nos Lecteurs*, it is headed, with a sub-heading *MM. les Patriotes Martyrisés!* But, perhaps, it is better translated.

'This weekly paper will be distributed every week by Allied aeroplanes among our brave Belgian and French friends living in the unhappy territory now in the occupation of the enemy. It has for its sole object the dissemination of the truth about the war. To you, who have so greatly suffered for your country, truth can only bring the assurance that the day of deliverance is at hand. Be sure, my friends, that here you will find nothing but the truth. I, who fall from the skies, have no idea of deceiving you, as the Bosche deceives his own people, with fine promises and with vain hopes, false dreams that can never come true. On the contrary, if I seem optimistic, it is because at the present time every event, military or political, assures me that the fortunes of Germany are on the wane. The whole world, from China to the United States, arms itself against the barbarous enemy of civilisation. Might is powerless before Right. Truth triumphs over lies.

Finally, the motto of the *Courier de l'Air* will always be: Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth!'

This exordium is followed by translations of the weekly communiqués, by brief surveys of the military events of the week, and by miscellaneous news items of interest to the Belgians, such as '*le British Academy*' vient de consacrer une séance à la glorification du poète Verhaeren. The whole paper makes a very attractive

news-sheet, bright and cheerful, and, as we now know, came as a true breath from Heaven to the inhabitants of the invaded districts. Despite the price set upon them by the Germans, copies of the *Courrier* spread like wildfire throughout Belgium and Northern France, and even reached Germany, to the mortification of various Army Commands. There was no need for the printed injunction—*Avis au lecteur* :

‘ You are requested not to tear up this paper, nor to destroy it when read. Rather lend it to your neighbour, and to the neighbour of your neighbour, seeing that they too are anxious to know what is happening in the world.’

Space will not admit of the quotation of further passages from the *Courrier*, which pursued an uninterrupted existence until it reached its forty-third number on January 25, 1918. By this time it had become a very serious thorn in the side of the German *Kommandatur*, and orders were issued that the occupants of any aeroplane brought down while carrying this or other ‘ seditious literature ’ would be tried by court martial and sentenced to severe penalties. This threat was followed by an example of its execution, and instructions were given that the publication of the *Courrier* should be suspended pending the inauguration of fresh means of distribution. Experiments were set on foot immediately, and as a result of this, distribution by balloon was begun.

A description of this means of aerial dissemination of propaganda will be given later ; at present we may concern ourselves with its effect upon the *Courrier*. Publication was resumed on March 7, 1918, with No. 44, which bears above the title the legend ‘ By balloon—Durch Luftballon.’ The foreword of this number is worth recording.

‘ For nearly a year, the *Courrier de l’Air* has been brought to you every week by our brave airmen. It has carried messages of truth and hope from the free world, from the peoples beyond the iron grip of German militarism. No credit must be given to the boast of the Germans, they seek to deceive you, to deceive their very selves. In respect of men, of munitions, of resolution, England is stronger than ever. France, resolute and confident, will carry on until the military force of Germany be exhausted. Italy, recovering from the unforeseen blow of last winter, is already beginning to force back the enemy. The great Republic of America has thrown all her weight into the scale of the Allies, and pours

into France every day from her inexhaustible reserves a stream of men and of munitions. Be of good cheer, the end is irrevocable. The *Courrier* will come to you by balloon, but the delivery will be more regular and plentiful than ever it was by aeroplane. When the wind blows from the direction of the Allies, be on the alert. From these white balloons, floating so high in the vastness of the atmosphere that you can hardly see them, will fall a rain of *Courriers*.'

From this time the *Courrier* flourished, through the dark days of the spring of 1918 until the last issue, which is dated November 7. It is only fair to say that the summaries of the situation, viewed dispassionately after the lapse of time, give a remarkably just picture of events. There is no hiding the seriousness of the German onslaught, only, as might be expected, a sober jubilation over its failures, such as the check before Amiens, the skilful strategy of Arras, the gallant stand at Givenchy. Even when the tide turned in July, when all the world knew that the war was won, the *Courrier* retained its reputation for moderation. It was, to some extent, inspired, in that it had the advantage of production by the staff of the War Office, but it had no access to sources of information denied to the British press.

Of the last number, one story must be told. The officer—in civil life a distinguished scientist—who was at that time acting as editor, had secured permission to visit the fighting zone, in order to arrange certain details as to the distribution of his paper. He was a somewhat resplendent person, who had never seen active service owing to his age, and consequently regarded his mission as one involving some personal danger. Armed *cap à pie*, he left the comparative security of the War Office to face the hazard of war, much to the delight of his sub-editor, in civil life a clergyman of the Church of England, and withal an intrepid gunner and kite-balloonist, now incapacitated from further active service. The latter, his superior's back once turned, composed, under the heading of 'Tartarin s'en va-t-en guerre,' a paragraph for the *Courrier* that would be spoilt by translation.

'L'histoire nous vient du G.Q.G. belge. Elle est d'ailleurs tout à fait délicieuse et digne de l'esprit proverbial des Belges. Un invité au Q.G., dont le séjour en France devait être bref, mais fort agréable, y arriva en grande tenue: canne-épée, beau casque de fer reluisant, uniforme dernier cri, muni de boutons d'or d'un éclat aveuglant, gilet qui pouvait, à la rigueur, servir de ceinture

de sauvetage. Etrange mélange du Beau Brummel jadis et du guerrier moderne !'

This is probably the first and only example of an editor being lampooned in his own journal.

But we must leave the consideration of the *Courrier* for a short examination of methods of propaganda in enemy countries. Much has lately been heard of this particular activity, especially since Lord Northcliffe lent it his name, but it is as well to point out that it was in a flourishing state of existence for over a year before the brothers Harmsworth devoted their energies to propaganda. The first attempts to influence the hostile nations were the insertion of carefully worded articles in the Press of bordering neutral states. This may be called the indirect method, and was certain of a limited success, for neutral opinion, as recorded in the national Press, was eagerly sought throughout the Central Empires. The objection to it was, that it had very little chance of influencing the rank and file, at whom propaganda must chiefly be aimed. Only the more highly educated classes were likely to have access to neutral papers, and the hostile Press was certain not to reproduce articles unfavourable to its cause.

The next step, adopted almost simultaneously by all the Allies, was the production of leaflets, and other matter, written in simple German that could be understood by the least educated. These leaflets were intended for direct distribution in and behind the enemy lines, and they introduced the problem of how most effectively to scatter them. There is no intrinsic difficulty in scattering pieces of paper, any more than there is in scattering pieces of steel, but the desired destination of the two forms of missile varies, as does the effect they are intended to produce. A shell, to secure its maximum effect, should burst in the centre of a group of men; propaganda leaflets, on the contrary, should be dispersed as widely as possible, and then should avoid the highly disciplined group, and should arrive within the grasp of the lonely sentry, free from the influence of his compatriots, and with nothing else to divert his thoughts. The group would probably treat a leaflet as a joke, the isolated man would read it through sheer boredom, and would possibly be induced to believe that there was something in its argument. And once propaganda has secured even the vaguest mistrust of the doctrines that it combats, its task is more than half accomplished.

Both the Allied Powers and the Central Empires experimented

with propaganda projectiles, using the trench mortar as their means of projection. The idea was, in most cases, to construct a bomb with a small bursting charge, which should, upon its arrival over the opposing lines, release a shower of pamphlets upon the heads of an astonished enemy. But this system had its obvious drawbacks. A trench mortar has always been an unpopular weapon, credited with the effect of incurring retaliation more than outweighing the damage it may possibly produce. Further, the most susceptible might well be expected to resent a shower of words hurled at him by so direct a method, or if not to resent it, at all events to ridicule it as rather too obvious a *ruse de guerre*. There is something inconsistent about an army that makes life unbearable with 'flying pigs' one moment, and the next sends out, through the mouths of the very same weapons, a flood of literature proclaiming that all men are brothers, or some such other pacific doctrine. It was not long before the trench mortar, as a projector of propaganda, was abandoned in favour of the aeroplane.

This latter weapon seemed at first to have every qualification for the purpose. It could scatter innumerable leaflets from any convenient height, and, owing to the length of time taken by them in falling, their arrival had no visible connection with its flight. Far more effect would naturally be produced by a leaflet blowing into a trench from nowhere in particular than from one obviously hurled by a lethal engine. Further, the aeroplane had a far greater penetration, could scatter its propaganda over rest-billets and railheads as well as over the trenches themselves. The advantages of this were twofold: the leaflets could be found and picked up over a far greater area, and men some way back from the line had more leisure and inclination to ponder their contents. But, on the other hand, there were many other calls upon the aeroplanes available. It was argued with a considerable show of reason that if a plane were to be sent upon a flight over hostile territory, it would be better employed dropping bombs than propaganda. Some went so far as to say that the best propaganda that could be dropped over the enemy were bombs and plenty of them, a contention that was correct as regards the Rhine towns and incorrect as regards London. At all events, it was felt that the aeroplane was too valuable a fighting machine proper to be employed as a disseminator of leaflets.

The next idea was the employment of observation balloons, which were to carry a supply of pamphlets to be thrown overboard

when the wind was blowing towards the enemy lines. Apart from the fact that the occupants of the balloon were usually too busy with their proper function of observation to worry much about casting packets of paper into space, the observation balloon had many disadvantages. A more ingenious and elaborate development of the observation balloon scheme was a revival of the man-lifting kite. When the wind was favourable, the kite was flown from some suitable spot, and a 'follower,' carrying a bundle of leaflets, caused to travel up the taut string of the kite. The 'follower' was fitted with an automatic release, which functioned at a predetermined height, allowed the leaflets to fly away, and the 'follower' to fall to the ground again ready for recharging. When the contrivance did not jamb, it was a very entertaining toy to play with.

It was not until late in 1916 that the free balloon was seriously considered as a vehicle of propaganda. The idea had always been obvious; load a balloon with the leaflets it was intended to distribute, send it up with a favourable wind, and there you were. The difficulty lay in predicting within a thousand miles or so where the balloon would come down. It was not until the science of meteorology, urgently impelled by the needs of the Artillery, made its marvellous war-time developments, that balloons could be used scientifically. 'Meteor,' in the shape of the various meteorological experts attached to the forces, eventually became able to gauge the velocity and direction of the wind at practically any height in any given locality. The rest was simple, so soon as a simple and reliable release had been evolved. You took your balloon to a given spot, say ten miles behind the lines, you knew your balloon would rise to say six thousand feet, and travel at that height until its burden was released. 'Meteor' gave the velocity of the wind at twenty miles an hour, south-west, at that height and place. Forty miles from the balloon position, and bearing north-east, was an enemy concentration camp. Load your balloon with the required type of propaganda leaflet, set your release to act in rather less than two hours, to allow of drift of the leaflets when falling, and there you were.

The results obtained from early experiments at home were deeply interesting, especially on the occasion when the dummy leaflets were plain pieces of paper, which fell from the sky upon the astonished population of Salisbury Plain. When it had struck those in authority to inscribe the pieces of paper with instructions

for those who picked them up to write on them when and where, and to return them to the experimental station, the results showed that surprising accuracy could be obtained, and that the balloons would travel for a considerable distance without excessive loss of gas. In one case, balloons released on the east coast of England dropped their burdens in northern Italy. The balloons were made of paper, 'doped' with a preparation to render them hydrogen-tight.

As equipped for service in France, a propaganda balloon section consisted of a couple of three-ton lorries for the conveyance of the hydrogen cylinders, balloons, and leaflets, with the necessary personnel of an officer and a few men. Certain stations were selected, such that some desirable target could be reached with any direction of wind from north round by west to south. The section proceeded to one or other of these stations, which were usually in proximity to a kite balloon post to ensure the necessary telephone communication with 'Meteor' (and also to be able to borrow hydrogen in emergency), and proceeded to fill, load, and release balloons as long as the wind held.

During the summer of 1918, one of the most useful of these stations was near Lozingshem, roughly speaking half-way between Béthune and Choques, and a convenient point in a bold salient of the British line. The scene there during a favourable wind was a most interesting one. The lorries were drawn up back to back, with canvas screens stretched between them, to form a shelter within which the balloons could be inflated. The balloons were unpacked, a pipe led from the hydrogen cylinders into the neck of each, and then the balloons blown out. When full, they each had a lifting capacity of ten or twelve pounds. The force and direction of the wind having been ascertained from 'Meteor,' the target was determined, and the appropriate bundle of leaflets selected. If the wind was blowing in such a way as to carry the balloons well over Belgium, the opportunity would be taken of delivering the weekly issue of the *Courrier*. If it were blowing from the west, the load was made up of pamphlets appealing to the German troops in some billeting area. In any case, the most suitable matter for the selected target was attached to the balloon after inflation.

The means of attachment was the solution of the whole problem of the use of balloons, and was as simple as it was ingenious. A length of the orange-coloured woven tinder, sold at every tobacconist's

for use in pipe-lighters, was taken, and one end of it fixed to the balloon. The sheaves of leaflets were strung on cotton tags, as used for binding papers in Government offices. The end of each tag was driven through the length of tinder at calculated distances from the free end. The rate of burning of the tinder was ascertained by experiment, and found to be, say, one inch in five minutes. If the target were twenty miles away, and the wind were blowing at thirty miles an hour, the balloon would be over the target in forty minutes. The tags would then be inserted at close intervals from six to ten inches from the end of the tinder.

Just as the balloon was released, the end of the tinder was held against a lighted cigarette, and commenced to burn. The balloon soared up into the sky, carried rapidly out of sight by the wind. In thirty minutes the first tag burnt through, and the papers fluttered separately to the ground, closely followed by those held by the next tag. By this means it was found possible to ensure a large percentage of the leaflets falling in or around a given target.

We have already seen that the actual matter distributed varied according to the destination for which it was intended. The invaded districts were served with such fare as the *Courrier*, or with pamphlets containing such special news as it was guessed that the Germans would suppress. Enemy troops and enemy territory were flooded with leaflets of an entirely different kind, the motive of which was invariably discouragement, it being axiomatic that the chief function of military propaganda is encouragement of one's friends and discouragement of the enemy. The principal line of argument was the necessity of the ultimate defeat of Germany, both politically through the blockade, and militarily, by the ever-increasing pressure of the forces brought against her.

Various means were employed to bring these facts home to the German people, and no less an authority than Ludendorff, in the extracts from his Memoirs recently quoted in *The Times*, bears testimony to their efficacy. Two examples may be given. The first was a cartoon, consisting of two sketches. One of these was inscribed '1914,' and depicts Germania, proud and flourishing, driving a donkey cart, the donkey symbolising the German people, fat and prosperous, the cart vaguely resembling the chariot of Boadicea. In front of the donkey, Germania dangles from the end of his whip a magnificent carrot, labelled *Sieg*. The other

sketch was inscribed '1918,' and shows the same equipage after four years of war. German'a is now a'most a skeleton; seated by her are two bloated figures, the profiteer and a gent'eman suspiciously like Hindenburg, weighing down the now patched and rickety cart. The donkey, thinner and more weary than Germania herself, still plods along, with bent knees and staring eyes, fixed now on an attenuated vegetable held out before it, labelled *Ersatz Sieg*. That this cartoon was appreciated is proved by the statements of prisoners, who affirmed that copies of it changed hands in the German lines for five marks ap'ce. And for every man who displayed it as a curiosity, at least ten must have pondered on the truth of its lesson.

Another leaflet that achieved notoriety was the 'Comparative Menus.' The *Berliner Tageblatt* was sufficiently injudicious one morning to bewail the high cost of living in Germany, and, by way of enforcing the moral, published the menus and corresponding prices of various restaurants in Berlin. Our propagandist seized upon the opportunity, and promptly issued a leaflet, showing in parallel columns the German menus and prices, as divulged by the *Tageblatt*, and the menus and prices of various representative London restaurants from the Ritz to those taverns that display a sign proclaiming them 'A good Pull-up for Carmen.' The result was startling, even to the sceptic, and must have produced a profound impression in Germany.

Space will not permit of reference to other forms of propaganda, of which the daily repartee exchanged by the various wireless stations was perhaps the most amusing. One incident of wireless propaganda, however, deserves to be quoted, even at the risk of spinning out an already over-long story. In the early days of the Bolshevik revolution, Tchitcherin devoted himself unstintingly to the production of grandiloquent appeals. His rhetoric was always addressed impartially 'To All,' which gave it a peculiar sonorousness. But once he addressed it 'To all Cossacks!' under which preface he gave vent to an impassioned appeal, 'Rise, mighty defenders of Russia! Cast out the enemies of our beloved country! Slay and fear not! To arms, Don! To arms, Kuban!' and much more to the same effect. The Cossacks took him at his word—and promptly massacred every Bolshevik envoy they could lay their hands upon!

THE MIDDLE-MAN.

I.

By some perversity of humour Nature had embodied in Miss Anne Cleaver, of the uncompromising name, a charming feminine personality, and in Miss Georgie Loveday, so adorably labelled, an extreme apparent masculinity. To emphasise the fun of the thing she had further bestowed upon Anne a confident and masterful disposition, while to Georgie she had given a bashfulness and timidity out of all keeping with her independent aspect. The two were past College contemporaries, present close friends, athletic and modern; and they were spending a holiday together in a village on the moors neighbouring and surrounding a great penal establishment. They explored, took prodigious walks, batted on junket and clotted cream, and lived generally the full life of the unshackled but self-conscious barbarian. And because, after the fashion of the higher education, they sought no adventure, adventure came to them.

It came, derisively enough, through Miss Loveday, who, if tongue-tied before strangers, was dauntless in her communings with Nature. Swarthy and tailor-made, she had no fear of solitary tramps, either in the expeditionary or the human form. Indeed, she preferred sometimes to be alone with her own will, unsubject to the correction of a dominant partner; and it was on one such occasion that, wandering free on the moors, her stoutly shod feet bore her unwitting to the threshold of a drama, whose fruits after all were destined for bolder lips than her own.

It was late summer or early autumn—a resplendent time if it were not for the mists, which in that humid climate are wont to gather and confound with the rapidity of a smoke screen, or milk dropped into clear water. By such a mist was Miss Loveday overtaken when botanising many miles from home. Preoccupied over her task, she had failed to observe both its approach and her own comparative proximity to a spot from which she always felt a nervous repulsion—the great prison. It distressed her to encounter its toilers labouring in the quarries or about the roads, and she was wont to avoid its vicinity from feelings of natural taste. Nor was her delicacy to be consciously tried in this instance,

because, before she could realise her locality, locality had become an empty term to her. Looking up, she found herself already shut in and surrounded by an insidious sea of white, whose rising tide had encompassed her while she prowled, eyes and body down-bent, mousing for specimens.

Miss Loveday stood hurriedly upright. Instantly she realised that she had lost her bearings—as how could it be otherwise? A simple conundrum asks the question of a supposititious benighted traveller, How would you tell your way if you came, at four cross-roads, upon a fallen quadrilateral signpost?—and the answer is, By referring to the arm of the post signifying whence I had journeyed. That is right enough; but supposing all four roads looked much the same to you, and in stooping and prowling about the wreck you had forgotten by which road you came? Such was the position in which Miss Loveday found herself. She had not the faintest idea, as she rose, whether she was facing north, south, east, or west.

Being a sensible young woman, she did not waste time in bemoaning her panic lot, but came to a swift decision. To proceed in any direction was simply to ask for trouble. A plunge into a bog or a sprained ankle were among the least of possible consequences. Near by loomed one of those huge rocky callosities which rise from the surface of the moor like bone-spavins from a horse's leg. She would wait in its ark-like shelter until such time as the mist lifted, and she was free to fly forth again into a familiar world.

The rock was high, and in misty girth great beyond her calculations: its massiveness gave her a sense of security. Edging along the wall of it, she found a deepish depression, or alcove, settling herself into which she determined to await, with what philosophy she might, the moment of her release.

She had not been many minutes in position when, with just a little stir of the heart, she heard footsteps approaching her shelter. They came near, slowed, and stopped at a point hidden from her. Straightway other footsteps—heavier and more shuffling these—followed in the wake of the first, and ended where they had.

'Lost the road in this blasted mist,' said a voice, which seemed to belong to the later arrival.

'Same here, mate,' answered the other. It was a nosey voice, this second, and its pronunciation was the slurred pronunciation of a fuddled man.

The two got talking, to the embarrassment of the unwilling listener. One of them, the nappy-seeming gentleman, was curiously confidential about his personal affairs. He was a sailorman, it appeared, recently paid off, and on his way to Exeter with a pocketful of money. The other, it seemed to Georgie, fawned to the confidence; his reception of it was fulsomely congratulatory. By the tone of his voice, half whining, half truculent, he might have been a tramp of the ugly order. He could never keep long off his own social grievances, being encouraged thereto by the sympathy of the other, who was of the class the most gullible of all where palpable imposture is concerned. The two—enormously to Georgie's relief—went off together after a spell of unprofitable waiting, thirsty for the refreshment to which the flush had invited the destitute. She caught a glimpse of the sailorman as he lurched out into the open—a comfortable, silly-faced young fellow, in a rough pea-jacket and a stoker's grimy cap.

'I hope they won't get bogged,' she thought charitably. 'I am sure it is very rash of them; and in that condition!' But she found comfort in reflecting on the extreme improbability of their hitting any house of call in the milky wilderness into which they had plunged.

The mist showed no present sign of dissipating. Its chill white solution seemed to settle and thicken about Miss Loveday into a very precipitate of silence. Ten mute minutes passed—and suddenly, startling as the crash of a stone on window glass in a quiet room, the sound of a shot rang out. It might have been near or far; in that dead atmosphere there was no judging; but it cracked on the drum of Miss Loveday's ear like a blow.

Her first thought was to connect it somehow with her recent neighbours. Then the report was followed quickly by another—by a third; and her instinct leaped to the right conclusion. A prisoner had escaped—she was certain of it.

The conviction was disturbing. It assured her, for one thing, that she had approached, in her preoccupation, much nearer the precincts of the prison than inclination would have led her. Then it was rather awful to stand there, the fog-bound auditor of a drama which might, even while she listened, be ending in bloody tragedy. Again, supposing the fugitive had succeeded in winning free, might not chance guide his flight in her direction, involving her in the problem which must necessarily arise between her charity and her duty as a citizen? She dwelt on, a hostage to Destiny,

in a state of considerable trepidation; then as time passed and nothing happened, gradually recovered her self-possession, and relapsed upon a philosophic endurance of the time of bondage.

And after all the weather was considerate to her, and the mist, after an hour's settled brooding, decided, with the local capriciousness of its kind, to rise and change its quarters; whereby Miss Loveday, in the still early afternoon, was set free to turn her face for home, guided by the sure landmarks which one by one began to reveal themselves to her emancipated eyes. Leaving her shelter, she quickly struck the high road, and, walking along it in a north-easterly direction, presently reached an angle which could be profitably negotiated by way of a short cut through a wood known as Clam's wood. It was a private wood, but with a right of way bisecting it—a broadish track thrust between a double moraine of bracken, and dark with the congregated trees which shut it in on either hand. Miss Loveday plunged into its glooms without a tremor, her tin box of specimens slung by a strap over her shoulder, her eyes alert for the small plunder of grass and moss. Half-way through, her glance, following a low-flitting bird, alighted on something which brought her to a stand with a shock the very repercussion of that she had experienced an hour earlier. White among the brake and the fallen mast of trees lay the body of a naked man.

It lay, easily resting, not twenty feet away within the wood, half hidden, half revealed, but unmistakable in its shocking indecorum. Its face looked upwards; one arm was bent under its reclining head; near it lay a small scattered tumble of clothes. All this, but little more, was just distinguishable, as, to the looker's excited percepts, were the tell-tale colour and quality of the clothes themselves. Too unerringly was to be deciphered on their drab texture the easy hieroglyphic of the governmental arrow.

Miss Loveday read it all at a glance. A convict *had* escaped, and in the mist had succeeded in reaching this wood, where, overtaken by exhaustion in the very act of discarding his damning livery (Heaven knew for what substitute), he had fallen fast asleep in the warm undergrowth.

What should she do? What was her course? To wake him up, to warn him, would be to condone a felony. Besides, in his state—if he had only possessed underclothes—no, she was modern, but she could not do it. Spell-bound one moment, the next she

came to a flurried decision, and uttered a loud and portentous 'Hem!'—a mere uncommitting throat-clearing business. Again and again she repeated that alarm, even as she turned to hurry on her way, taking an impression with her that her final ejaculation had got home, and that she had distinctly detected a movement in the prostrate body. Five minutes later she was out of the wood, and speeding for the village, a couple of miles beyond, where her friend awaited her return.

Miss Cleaver took the story of the adventure very much after her way.

'If you weren't so passionately addicted to your own society,' she said, 'these uncomfortable things wouldn't happen to you.'

'But I don't see how your being there would have made any difference,' responded her friend plaintively.

'Don't you?' said the other. 'Then I have no more to say'—which was after all incorrect, as she said a great deal, incidentally pointing the moral of selfish and solitary tramps in the loss they were apt to entail on their indulgers.

'If you had stayed at home,' she said, with an engagingly mischievous laugh—and Anne could laugh very infectiously—'you wouldn't have missed seeing your darling Padre.'

'Don't be ridiculous, you brat,' said Georgie; but she actually blushed.

She *did* admire the Padre (Redstall by name, a chaplain at the prison, and the very moral, to her mind, of what a priest should appear), but with a distant respect which never even contemplated the favour of a nearer approach. The two had encountered more than once in their walks the upright figure, striding with a grave and preoccupied air on its solitary way, and, being interested, had applied to their landlady for information. It was quite satisfactory. The straight and earnest-looking young man, with the glow of fervour in his dark eyes, was considered a force at the prison. How could it be otherwise? Georgie reflected. She was sentimental at heart—much more so than her friend, who, a divine tall slip of a girl, was too sure of herself, of her youth and charm, ever to have known the aching dreams which are born of conscious unattractiveness. And so Anne described, with an unaffected laugh, the appearance of Mr. Redstall in the village on some visiting expedition, and bantered the other upon the treat of which her wandering mood had deprived her.

But she had not a word of approval for Georgie's uncompromising—or compromising—behaviour in the wood.

‘To try to wake him!’ she said. ‘That was to abet a criminal offence. We had better keep the whole matter to ourselves. Really, your reputation, not to say your safety, is at stake.’

II.

B49, at work in the quarries, found suddenly the opportunity for which his dull but tenacious soul had been watching and waiting during a period of many months. Ordinarily, ample precautions were taken against the risks of flight in weather favourable to such attempts—to the extent, indeed, that for days sometimes, or even for weeks on end, the whole establishment would be kept confined to quarters owing to the prevalence of fogs. But on this occasion, all such calculations being stultified by the suddenness and unexpectedness of the visitation, the sentries were found, as it were, napping, and, before they could rub their eyes and see clear, B49 had thrown down his tools, slithered round a boulder and up a gully, and disappeared. Shots pursued his presumptive whereabouts as a matter of course and necessity; he had foreseen that contingency, and ran stooped, belly almost to ground, like a hunted fox. It was a mad, desperate essay; but by sheer good luck he won clear of all entanglements, human and contrived, and got swiftly upon the moors. He had no plan at all in his rocky head—only to escape, and leave an intolerable beerless and toilsome life behind him. He was a great bovine creature, with a bull's brain and muscles, with a blockish sense of grievance, and with no capacity whatever for self-expression—the sort of mind that would suffer wrong or discover justice with an equally inarticulate impassibility. He knew he could never explain himself, so adopted moroseness as a defence and a weapon.

The fugitive found the moors, blundered upon the high road to Exeter, and pounded heavily along it. Only one thought was instantly vivid to his racing mind—to rid himself somehow and somewhere of his betraying canonicals. With those disposed of, and by whatever replaced, he might have a chance. In the meantime his single interest was to put as long an interval as possible between himself and his pursuers.

The fog hung motionlessly about him, so thick that he could barely discern the road. At a point a mile or so on, where the

latter wheeled, forming an extensive salient, he had almost floundered into a stile before he realised that he was off the highway. He crossed the stile, and found himself entering among trees—at least a temporary shelter. The gloom of a dense wood gathered about and enclosed him; with stealthy swiftiness he pursued the course of a mossy track which he felt rather than saw beneath his feet. Suddenly, at a quarter mile in, he ran upon a man moving before him. The overtaking was so instant and unexpected that he had no chance to withhold, even had he wished to. But he did not: desperate necessity decided his course for him upon the very moment of the encounter.

The man, hearing the footsteps, had turned to ascertain their cause. He was a nervous subject, it was evident—all the better for that. His face looked white and clammy in the shock of the meeting; he stared at the bodeful apparition with ghastly eyes. The convict lost no time in explanation.

‘See here, mate,’ he said. ‘I’m desprit, that’s what I am. Look for yourself.’

‘I’m looking,’ said the man. ‘You’ve cut your lucky, I suppose. What do you want with me?’

‘I want,’ said B49, ‘them trousers; I want that there peacoat; I want that stoker’s cap, and what’s more I mean to have ‘em.’

‘Steady, mate,’ said the other. His voice and his lips shook. ‘I wouldn’t say as I’d disoblige a gentleman in need.’

‘You’d best not say it,’ interrupted the convict, ‘if you vally your life. Come on, now!’

His strong fingers twitched and hooked. The sailorman began hurriedly to pull off his coat.

‘What am I to do going nekked, that’s all?’ he asked, an abject whimper in his voice.

‘You won’t go nekked,’ said B49. ‘You’ll put on these here things of mine.’

He began disrobing viciously. He looked so sinister, so murderous, and withal a brute of such overwhelming physical power, that resistance was idle. The exchange was rapidly made, and B49, a seaman in externals, prepared to depart on his way. But on a final thought he turned.

‘Damn me,’ he said, in a low voice, ‘if I don’t think your mouth better shut, arter all.’

The other leaped back with a mortal bleat.

‘Not murder!’ he cried.

III.

It was from their landlady that the two friends first heard the known particulars of the case ; and with what staggering effect on one of them ! It was with a sense almost of physical sickness that Miss Loveday learned the truth about the naked body seen by her in Clam's Wood. It had been not that of a sleeping, but of a murdered man, she discovered appalled. The head had been battered in with a great stone found near the corpse, and the evidences about the spot showed only too plainly with what purpose the crime had been committed. But indeed there could never be a doubt as to that from the first. B49 had been captured—early and easily captured, alas !—wearing the very blood-stained clothes of his victim ; while the convict's own livery had been found lying by the side of the dead body. It was evident that, after perpetrating the deed, he had hurriedly stripped the corpse, and, discarding his own vesture, had donned that of the sailor. If Providence had disconcerted that ruse, it remained none the less grossly and palpably manifest. The body had been identified, and the prisoner, according to latest intelligence, had allowed his guilt to go by default. He had neither confessed nor denied.

So the ladies learnt ; and for days, in the local press and elsewhere, the shadow of the horror pursued and haunted Miss Loveday. She was very much affected.

'I can't help feeling,' she mourned on one occasion, 'a sense of personal responsibility in this matter. It is dreadful, but it is true.'

'What on earth do you mean ?' demanded her friend.

'I mean,' answered Georgie, 'the oppression of a secret which I ought to have confessed at once.'

'What secret ?'

'How can you ask, Anne ? Quite certainly I was the first to discover the body lying there.'

'Well, does that teach you or anyone anything ?'

'So much in these horrible cases may depend upon a question of time.'

But Anne could not see the necessity.

'If it were not all so plain,' she said. 'But where everything speaks for itself without a shadow of uncertainty.'

'Yes, but does it ?'

Miss Cleaver looked at her friend curiously.

'What have you got upon your mind ?' she asked.

'I think,' said Georgie resolutely, 'I shall write to Mr. Redstall.'

'O—ho!' crowed Miss Cleaver. 'So the secret is out!' and she laughed warblingly.

'Don't be an ass,' said Miss Loveday, violently blushing. 'Write yourself, if you prefer it.'

'O, no! not me, thank you,' said Anne, momentarily lapsing from the higher education. 'I have no confidences to give Mr. Redstall.'

'Nor have I. But I don't know who else to go to except the police: and that would be dreadful.'

'Go to? What is all this mystery?'

'I'll tell you, if you like.'

'I certainly *should* like.'

Miss Loveday gave her reasons for writing, and they seemed to her friend sufficient. Anne sat silent at the end of the explanation, looking a little scared and shamefaced. After all, to realise that one has been loosely playing with the problem of a human life is not a comfortable reflection.

'Yes, write to him by all means,' she said.

IV.

Miss Cleaver, her friend having gone to tea with a neighbour, was sitting by herself when Mr. Redstall was shown in. The chaplain greeted the girl with a grave courtesy; he held an open letter in his hand, and tapped it with a smile which was at once introductory to his subject, and appreciative of the debt he found himself glad to owe to so engaging a creditor. He was a handsome young man, a Padre of the human order which was to prove itself and justify its being in the monstrous tests of a few years hence.

'It was well and courageous of you, Miss Loveday,' he said, advancing in the frankest manner, 'to write me this letter.'

Anne bowed. For some inexplicable reason she let the mistake pass uncorrected.

'It seemed to me—to us,' she said, 'that it ought to be written.'

'To you and to your friend?' he answered. 'I have had the pleasure of passing you more than once together, I think, about these roads.'

'We are very fond of walking,' said Anne. 'It was during a walk that this—this dreadful *contretemps* occurred.'

'Ah! you mustn't call it dreadful, since it may be the means of

...saving an innocent life. Please tell me the whole particulars, if you will, from your own lips.' He said the word with a certain thrill, observing the contour of those ripe fruits.

Anne obeyed, telling about the fog, the two voices, the shots, the discovery of the body, all exactly as Georgie had described the facts to her, only leaving her hearer with the impression that it was she who had suffered the uncanny experience. She didn't say so; she didn't know why she so equivocated; she felt mean and hot; but the impulse came to her irresistibly—the man was so prepossessing.

'Yes,' said the chaplain at the end. He bent eagerly forward. And the conclusion you draw from it all—he tapped the letter again—'is——?'

'That between the poor sailor and the escaped convict there was a middle-man.'

'The tramp, in fact; and that it was he who committed the murder?'

'It is dreadful to have to think—to have to say so; but—yes.'

'Why, if I may ask?'

'Must I say? It is only an idea on my—on our part.' (The visitor noted the little self depreciation, and put a rather tender mark of approval against it.) 'It is because, according to the statements in the papers, according, indeed, to the sailor's own overheard words, he had a considerable sum of money in his possession, and no money was found in the clothes which the escaped prisoner was wearing when captured.'

'Yes. And you argue from that——?'

'I argue that, in his desperate necessity, the last thing the convict would have done would have been to reject or throw away such a means to possible safety. Therefore, he never had the money; but someone else had—had already had it, I think.'

The chaplain gazed thoughtfully and long into the young down-cast face before him.

'Would you mind,' he said presently, 'reconstructing the whole scene—as you conceive it?'

Anne considered; then looked up suddenly.

'Why,' she said, 'hasn't the convict himself declared his innocence?'

'Ah!' replied the chaplain: 'there you touch on a psychologic conundrum. Supposing we call him, as he is professionally classified, B49. Well, B49, as a criminological product, is not

uncommon to my experience. He is bad, but not so bad as he is painted. He knows that, but no one else knows it, and, being constitutionally tongue-tied, he cannot explain himself. Where appearances are against him he feels his own incapacity to set them right, so he takes refuge in silence, leaving it to the prosecution to prove, if it can, its case. He knows by experience that nothing he can say will count in his favour; he had better hold his tongue, lest he blunder into self-committals. He simply says he is innocent; every criminal says he is that. But why? asks the Law. That's for you to find out, says B49.'

'Well,' said Anne, 'I believe he is innocent.'

'So do I,' said the chaplain. 'But I haven't heard your theory.'

'It may be wrong, stupid, a hundred things,' said the girl hurriedly; 'but if you want it—well, here it is. I think the tramp followed the poor half-drunken sailor into the wood, and murdered and robbed him there. Then, appalled by his crime, and thinking of a way to escape its consequences, he conceived the idea, in order to confuse his own identity, of dressing in the dead man's clothes while burying his own somewhere in the thicket. Having done this, he was going on his way, when he was overtaken by—by B49. Exactly the same idea occurred to the convict. He forced the tramp to change clothes with him (the tramp, for his part, taking care to drop aside in the process the money he had stolen), and went on his way dressed as the sailor. Then, once rid of his persecutor, a diabolical idea came into the tramp's head. He found his way back to the dead body, took off and threw down the convict's clothes beside it, and, recovering his own from their hiding-place, resumed them, and went on *his* way, having made it appear as if the convict were the murderer. There.'

The chaplain rose to his feet, with a glowing face.

'And did you evolve all this from your own inner consciousness? he asked.

Miss Cleaver looked down. She did not answer—as indeed how could she diplomatically, seeing that the whole constructed theory was Georgie's.

'It is splendid,' cried the chaplain enthusiastically: 'and more—it is the truth, every word of it. So it did happen. It was through the money on him, recklessly displayed, that suspicion fell on the tramp, and the man is now in custody. You must forgive me for tempting you on, Miss Loveday; but I considered I owed it to your letter to call and explain.'

'It was not I who wrote the letter,' said Anne desperately at last. 'My friend wrote it, after consultation between us. I ought to have corrected you sooner. I—I am not Miss Loveday.'

'Ah!' said the chaplain heartily. 'Is that so? But whoever wrote the letter, it is clear enough, to me at least' (on what possible grounds, Mr. Redstall?), 'who inspired it. I call it wonderful.'

And so, dropping her own blue orbs before that admiring inquisition, Anne was fain to let it pass. And at that moment Miss Loveday came into the room.

'Georgie,' said her friend, her face scarlet, 'this is Mr. Redstall from the prison. I have been telling him what our theory was, and, do you know, it was actually right.'

'Yes,' said the chaplain. 'And amongst us we are going to save B49.'

He said 'us,' but his gaze was for Anne alone.

Well, well: it is a partial Providence that watches over the attractive. And yet it was a Padre who told the story, and with a sympathetic chuckle over the resourcefulness of an unscrupulous young lady. The plain have small chance with the coloured in this naughty world.

BERNARD CAPES.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

O LITTLE boy who threw a stone
 At Socrates, and hit Euphron ;
 Who, wounded in the lower calf,
 Went home and beat his better half ;

Who ran into the street and cried,
 While, passing on the other side,
 A poet made a couplet, bright
 But cynical, upon the sight ;

Which tiniest of pleasantries
 Came safely down the centuries,
 Almost undamaged by the way
 (Though Tragedies have gone astray),

And exercises brains that loom
 In the Museum Reading-Room ;
 Or poses as an epigram
 For purposes of an exam.

And that it was that floored me, sure
 (And really it is most obscure) :
 Ploughed ! And, observe, from far B.C.
 That furrow pointed straight for Me !

So, while I vainly try to guess
 Why the twin portals of Success
 (As all authorities insist)
 Are Particle and Aorist ;

And note in all my kinsmen's eyes
 Every emotion but surprise,
 I write, lest you should censure me,
 This devious apostrophe :—

O Boy (as I remarked before),
Had you but stayed within the door,
Or had you been a better shot,
Or chosen another sage to pot,

I'd not been in this horrid fix;
And therefore, from beyond the Styx,
Consider well the curious chain
Of circumstance that links us twain:

And how that stone you can't replace
Careers in Time as once in Space—
A devastating Comet: who
Will be the next it bangs into?

And all you boys of later days,
So rash in various sorts of ways,
Remember trouble's on the wing
Whenever you do anything.

R. B.

THE END OF OLD MAN FOWLER.

BY THE LATE WARBURTON PIKE, WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY W. A. BAILLIE-GROHMAN.

THE last four years have shown us countless times how men die on the stricken field and on the high seas. The following true little tale depicts how another type of empire-builder, the frontiersman, meets the foe that spares none of us.

The story is by the pen of a dear old friend, the late Warburton Pike, who since writing it has himself met a pathetically tragic end. For indomitable pluck, hardy body, and manly good-fellowship this persistent explorer of the vast forest-wilds of the North-West was without peer, as those who ever 'hit the trail' at Pike's side all acclaim. How the story came to be written was in this way.

During one of my friend's visits to my place in Tyrol we were looking over some old photographs of western scenes. Amongst them were a few secured by the very first camera that ever penetrated into the then wilds of the Kootenay country in British Columbia, somewhere about the year 1883. In those pre-Kodak days glass plates and a cumbersome wooden box and tripod made photography in wild regions a temper-trying proceeding that ended only too often in utter failure by the kick of a horse, a fall, a squeeze of the pack between trees in trailless woods, or by one or the other of the many mishaps incidental to travel through the wilds. Amongst the pictures that had escaped was one of a group of some six or seven white men who, with a score or so of Chinamen, constituted the entire population of the once thriving Wild Horse Creek mining camp in what is now the populated East Kootenay District. Amongst the group was a tall, elderly man clad, like the others, in a tattered shirt, ragged overalls, and mocassins.

As soon as Pike put eyes on the faded old photo he exclaimed: 'Why, that's Old Man Fowler, surely!' And he there and then told me in his quiet, ever modestly matter-of-fact diction the story of Ephraim Fowler. Subsequently, at my urging, he put it into shape for publication in exactly the form in which it now meets the eye of the reader.

The war and his own sad death in 1915 prevented its publica-

tion, and when the latter occurred the MS., complete for the printer, came to me. There is no reason why this pathetic little story of an actual occurrence should any longer be withheld from those who could claim his friendship and from the wide circle who admired his clean and manly writings.

All through a long autumn day, from the first sign of daylight, I had paddled along the desolate shore of a lake in Northern British Columbia, rather short of provisions and without a gun, struggling against a head wind in the hope of reaching food and shelter at the foot of the lake. It was a typical autumn day of the North, with bright sunshine and a keen air faintly suggestive of the coming winter.

The leaves on the poplars and willows had turned to gold, and the fireweeds lay as a red carpet among the bleached stems of the burnt forest. There was nothing in the colouring as gorgeous as may be seen in the Eastern Canadian forests in autumn, but the modest effects of the North are not without their charm. In the quiet bays where the surface of the water was unruffled the reflection of the colours was most effective, and the actual shore-line of the low beaches had completely lost its definition in a maze of red and yellow. In the open lake the white caps were leaping in the sunlight, and a strong north wind forced me to skirt the bays to take advantage of all available shelter.

There was little sign of animal life, and I saw nothing all day but a couple of minks running among the drift logs on the beach, but birds were plentiful, as the wild-fowl were gathering together from their breeding-places in the smaller lakes in preparation for their southern flight. The cheery little phalaropes kept pitching in front of the canoe and rising again with a pleasant chatter when the stem nearly struck them, sand-pipers nodded their heads gracefully on the gravel points, and the loons called drearily and almost incessantly.

In spite of all my efforts I found it was impossible to reach the foot of the lake that night, and darkness was falling rapidly when I put ashore at a small deserted mining town about ten miles short of the place where I had hoped to camp.

Thirty years ago this town was the scene of great activity, for the diggings were good and gold dust was changing hands with the carelessness which always accompanies easily gathered wealth. But for many years the production of gold has ceased and the

whole population of miners, whisky sellers, and gamblers has left the squalid collection of log cabins to be obliterated by the kindly growth of the forest.

I hardly expected to find anybody here, except perhaps a travelling Indian or two, and was surprised to see an old white man cleaning fish on the beach. But for his very human occupation he might easily have been taken in the evening gloom for some spirit of the dead and gone days of thirty years ago. He was in absolute keeping with his surroundings, a perfect incarnation of change and decay, but withal cleanly of person and clad in blue overalls and a flannel shirt which had evidently been washed quite recently. His face was shrunken and lined with age, but his white beard was carefully trimmed and the honest grey eyes still bore token of a manly beauty long passed away. He had been originally a tall man, but his six feet of height had been permanently bent to fit into the five-foot tunnels in which, he afterwards told me, he had worked for many years of his life.

'I'm right glad to see you,' he said, 'I haven't seen a soul for three weeks. Come up and stay the night in my cabin and you'll be doing an old man a kindness and keeping out of the weather yourself. I've got lots of grub, so you needn't bring up anything but your blankets, the fishing is good just now and I'm catching more than I can eat.'

This seemed too good a stroke of fortune to refuse, so I hauled up the canoe, shouldered my blankets and followed the old man to his cabin. He had fitted up one of the abandoned log cabins comfortably enough, rebuilt the stone chimney, and was using the logs of the next building for firewood. We had an excellent white fish for supper with yeast-powder bread and tea without sugar or canned milk. It was at once evident that times were not very good with the old man in spite of the lake's bountiful supply of fish, but he fulfilled all the duties of a host with the kindness and dignity so natural to the old-time placer miners of the Pacific coast.

After supper we sat on boxes in front of the fire and my host became talkative, as men will to a casual stranger when they have lived alone for months together and are hungry for a chance to interchange ideas on any trivial subject.

'Lonesome,' he said, 'of course it's lonesome, but I tell you it's a good sight better to be lonesome than to live with people you can't get along with. I've tried that too, I've been a family man,

and I've got a daughter living still, well on for fifty years old. Yes, I see that makes you look up—I'm just turned eighty-two, but I hope to live a bit longer yet. It was all right as long as the old woman lived, she was a good woman, but she's been gone now this twenty years. I've been a miner all my life, a forty-niner on the Sacramento, and you know how it is with miners out here in the West, money easy come and easy go. I've handled lots of it, but I never could keep it. I haven't been much of a drinking man either, but I always lived well and kept the old woman well as long as I could. I spent a lot of money too in buying into claims that weren't worth a cent. I was in here with the first rush in 1874 and got into a claim with old Dan MacIntyre about three miles up the creek. That turned out all right, we made good money, and I did keep a bit of it, enough to buy a house and lot in Helena, Montana, and I decided that over to my daughter the day she was married, and she is living there yet. Pretty soon afterwards my old woman died and that broke me all up. There didn't seem to be anything left to work for, my daughter was comfortable enough, and it didn't take much to keep me. I was a good miner—I don't mind saying it myself—and if I wasn't working a claim of my own I could always get the top wages that were going. But about ten years ago I was took terrible sick, of course I was an oldish man then—over seventy—and I came pretty near going in. I was never much good to work after that, and the bosses began to look sideways at me when I went to ask for a job. That came hard on me because I knew they were right too, and it made me feel awful mean when I found I couldn't fill any job there was round a mine, quartz or placer. When my daughter heard of the fix I was in, nothing would do but that I must come and live with them till I could find a good job. I knew what she meant all right, she thought I was past work and she was letting me down easy, but anyway I went and lived with them. They had a big lot of children, and I was always fond of them, and I could do a bit of work about the place, and sometimes picked up an easy job outside to make a little money to help pay for my board. But it never suited me, living in town. I was born in a wild part of the coast of Massachusetts—it was pretty wild eighty years ago—and all my life was used to having plenty of room. That's what a man wants, plenty of room. I tell you getting old don't matter so much to a man as long as he can see round a bit and take notice of the sea and sky and the trees budding and shedding and the birds coming

and going and such like things ; he finds out that he's only going the way of all nature. But in a town a man misses all that and only sees the people and the houses. The young men are in a hurry and jostle him round on the side-walk, and it seems somehow that a man's got no right to be old in a city. But still I stayed with it till my daughter got sick. She had had seven children, and what with bearing them and raising them and fussing round with them till they were old enough to turn loose, she was pretty well worn out. And then her husband's sister came to take charge of the children and help with the house work. She was a fair terror, flat-breasted and plain and sour. She might have been better if she'd had the luck to pick up a husband, but Lord help the poor man ! They called her Aunt Sophia, and she was boss right from the word go. There was never a bit of peace in that house after she came ; she was clean and tidy and kept the place in good shape, but there was no pleasing her, and morning to night she'd be scolding some of the children and grumbling at the way she was used. She was one of those women who think they are always badly used and awful religious, too, with a text from the Bible ready on her tongue whenever she got into a scolding bout and always a bitter text too, nothing about mercy and loving-kindness for her, but lots about wailing and gnashing of teeth and such like. She wouldn't allow any smoking in the house, called it a filthy habit, and wondered why men made such beasts of themselves with their smoking and drinking. I couldn't stand it for long and took to stopping away as much as I could, just coming in to meals and going out again, but even then I was always in trouble with her. Sometimes I'd meet an old pal that I'd known in the diggings and we'd sit and have a glass of liquor together and yarn about old times till I'd find I was late for supper. And when I got home Aunt Sophia would say "How is it you can't come home in time for meals ? What have you been doing ? You ain't working, are you ? You ain't earning nothing surely ?" She used to make me mad talking that way, for a man don't like to own up he's no more good to work. She took a delight in doing it, the only thing that seemed to make her happy for a little time. Oh ! she had a tongue and a temper all right, and she knew how to rub it in to me.

'And then a thing came strong into my mind, a thing that had been there for thirty years, but I had never really thought much about it till I began to feel I couldn't go on living that way any longer, old or young. What do you think it was ? Why ! just

this bank of gravel where I am working now, half a mile up the creek here. I got a pretty good prospect out of it in the early days, and always meant to come in again and have a try at it; but I put it off so long that it seemed to be almost too late. Well, I got thinking about that patch of ground, and dreaming about it at night, always shovelling out coarse gold and nuggets that I could see lying among the dirt; and the more Aunt Sophia bothered me the worse I got, till I saw clear enough that I had to come back and have another shot at placer digging and live a bit quietly. The last crash came quite sudden like. I ran across Dan MacIntyre one day in the street—the same Dan that I told you I worked in a claim with on this creek; pretty near as old a man as myself, but hale and hearty still. He'd been living with a nephew in Helena over a year, and I never knew it! I was awful glad to see Dan, and we had so many drinks together for the sake of old times that I got brave and asked him up to the house for a bit of supper and to meet the folks. Lord! but Aunt Sophia looked mean when I brought Dan in and told her he had come to supper. I'd never brought anyone in to a meal since she came. She didn't say a word to him, just put out another knife and fork, and Dan being a bit ginned-up didn't take any notice of her. The supper went first-rate, the kids all took to Dan right off, and he filled them up with mining and wild Indians and bears and panthers till he had the young ones scared to death, but still asking for more. Then nothing one could do but he must play some fool game of cards with them, and right then, while he was dealing the cards, Dan made a bad break and spat on the carpet! Now, nobody ever did this before in that house, as far as I know, and Aunt Sophia was knocked all silly at first. Then one of the kids laughed and got a smack on the side of the head, and Aunt Sophia opened out on me. "Take the dirty hog out," she said, "and never bring him here again. You ain't neither of you fit to come into a decent house!" Dan was a kind of mild-mannered man, and didn't know what he had done wrong, because he hadn't been used much to carpets, and spitting on the floor is common enough, and nothing said in the West in the sort of places where Dan would mostly go. But he could see he was hard up against it when he took a squint at Aunt Sophia's face, and judged it was about time for him to go home.

'I went out with him to sort of apologise, because it seemed

somehow he had been treated a bit short, though, of course, I know there are a lot of people who think spitting in company ain't just first-class manners. The liquor had gone dead in us by this time, and I thought maybe a drink would cheer him up as well as anything; and while we were sitting over it, I opened out and told him my plan for getting clear of trouble by coming right back to this country and going to work again on the creek.

'Now this was right into Dan's hand, as his nephew was getting a bit tired of keeping him, and there was some talk of sending him to an old man's home to end his days. Any man with a touch of independence would rather starve to death in the woods than go into one of those places, though they tell me some of them are well run and comfortable enough. I had a couple of hundred dollars put away so that Aunt Sophia couldn't find them, and she was awful fond of money with all her religious talk and sour habits. She'd get it if she could lay hands on it, every time.

'The end of the deal was that Dan and I should take the train next night for the coast, and come up to British Columbia by the first boat. We planned it all out, we two old fellows of eighty, without a word to anybody, just like a couple of boys running away from school. We met at the train next night, and got to Seattle all right in a day and a half, but found we had to wait over another night for the boat. We were sitting in one of those music-halls where you go in free, but ain't very welcome unless you order liquor pretty often, and were enjoying ourselves first-rate, when I'm blowed if Dan's nephew didn't walk in and say right off-hand: "Come along, Uncle, we've just time to make the train back to Helena!" He had got wind of Dan's skipping out, and followed up by the next train.

'You never saw a man wilt like Dan did! I thought he would have stood up to the young fellow, and told him to go to hell, anyway, but no, he just said he was ready, and he'd only taken a run down to see an old friend off to the diggings. And away he went, leaving me to make the trip alone, and good money out of pocket on account of Dan's railroad ticket. I was scared, too, that he had given the show away, and they'd be following after me, for that telegraph wire is awful smart nowadays, so I went right down aboard the boat. The night watchman gave me a cup of coffee and a place to turn in, and when I came on deck we were steaming out of Port Townsend, and I was a free man again. I made it up here all right—the Hudson's Bay Com-

pany are pretty good people, and gave me a little credit : I'll pay them back in the spring when I get my clean up. The claim looks different to what it used to, the creek runs on the other side of the channel now, and there's been a slide over the face of the gravel. The raspberry bushes have taken hold, too, and it's surprising how the willows have grown up in thirty years. I'm drifting in through the slide, and may strike pay dirt any time. Yes, it's a wonderful healthy country, but I had a touch of scurvy last winter, and it's strange how that thing knocks a man out. I ain't quite over it yet, my neck swells up awful big sometimes, and I've lost a good many teeth, and there are some black spots on my legs which bother me a lot. But I'm getting better, and there's a sack of potatoes coming in for me by the next pack-train, and that's sure cure for scurvy.'

In the morning we walked up the creek to have a look at the claim, each of us carrying a log from one of the old houses, for there was no standing timber near the creek. It was about all the old man could do, and yet he had been carrying every stick for timbering his tunnel for half a mile and cheerfully proposed to do so until he struck pay, when he hoped to be able to hire a man to do the hard work. The tunnel as far as it went was driven in most workmanlike style, and it was quite evident that the old man was right in saying that he had been a good miner, but with his failing strength the distance he had accomplished was nothing for the time he had been working.

The situation appeared to me most unpromising ; as far as I could tell the ground had already been worked, and the top dirt allowed to slide in after the pay gravel had been taken out. It would have been too cruel to suggest such a thing to my host, as he was thoroughly happy in his undertaking and confident of success. Nearly all the old placer miners have these dreams of wealth to be made in some spot visited years before, and time has a trick of magnifying the possibilities of a piece of ground which only prospected moderately well in the season of youth and strength. Some of these men have the last satisfaction of putting their dreams to a practical test ; it is usually a failure, and death finds them working contentedly in the lonely places of the western frontier.

A fresh fair wind was blowing down the lake when I was ready to launch the canoe. The old man thanked me for stopping with him as if I had done him some particular favour. 'Be sure you come and see me on your way back next summer, I'll have some

good coarse gold to show you. You are like me, I think, fond of plenty of room. My name's Fowler,' he put in as an afterthought, for we had got on very well together without names up till now. 'Ephraim Fowler, anybody in town here knows me,' he added with grim humour.

When I last saw him he was pulling a shapeless boat to windward with slow laborious strokes to visit his nets. I put up my sail and ran speedily to the foot of the lake, where two half-breeds awaited my arrival before starting on a long winter's expedition in the wilderness.

It was in the following July when we passed through the lake again on our way back to civilisation, the height of the summer with the fireweed in full bloom. We put ashore at the old town site to boil a kettle of tea, but found nobody on the beach to welcome us. On a small rise overlooking the lake was a new grave surrounded by a pole fence, with a rough hewed spruce slab setting forth the fact that it stood there 'in memory of Ephraim Fowler, a native of Massachusetts, who died here in November 1905, aged 82 years.' So the sack of potatoes had failed to do its work, and my old friend had gone the way that all must go.

When we reached the headquarters of the district after another week's travel I inquired about the final scenes of Fowler's career, but the Gold Commissioner could only tell me that the old man was found dead in his blankets by the first traveller who crossed the lake after the ice had set fast in the early days of December. A constable had been sent in to perform the burial rites and take possession of all effects which he might discover. The Gold Commissioner showed me the following letter from the constable:

December 21, 1905.

To — The Gold Commissioner,
District of —,
Province of British Columbia.

'SIR,—In accordance with your instructions to proceed to — Lake to bury the remains of Ephraim Fowler who was found dead in his cabin on Dec. 3rd last, I beg to report that I have performed this duty. The deceased died apparently from old age and scurvy. The following is an inventory of property found in the cabin and in the tunnel on — Creek.

- 1 alarm clock.
- 1 Miner's pick.
- 2 shovels.

1 gold pan.
 3 sluice boxes.
 2 lbs. quicksilver.
 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. gold dust (value \$4).
 2 lbs. tea.
 $\frac{1}{2}$ sack flour.
 $\frac{1}{2}$ sack beans.
 5 lbs. bacon.
 20 lbs. potatoes.
 2 kettles, 1 frying-pan.
 2 pairs blankets.
 A small amount of wearing apparel.

'There were no papers of any kind except a Miner's licence, No. 29487, issued from your office under date of June 1, 1905.

'The deceased appears to have died intestate.

'Your obt. servant,
 (Sgd.) 'H. D.'

The last sentence seemed to be needless sarcasm on the part of the constable after his careful inventory of the gathering of eighty odd years.

Probably Ephraim Fowler is well pleased with his resting-place by the edge of the lake. He has certainly plenty of room and nothing to fear from his neighbours. If he can see, he may watch the ever-changing face of the lake and the coming and going of the short northern summers; if he can hear, he may listen to the cry of the loons and the rustle of the snow driven through the frozen willow twigs when the winds of winter howl across the lake, a very restful sound for a sleeper who is quite secure from the fury of the elements, and, surely, there is promise of much security in six feet of mother earth.

NOBODY'S CHILDREN.¹

A CORPS OF IMPROVISORS.

BY BENNET COPPLESTONE.

I.

STANDING between the Navy and the Army, in spirit distinct from both, harried in times of peace though greatly cherished in war, proudly conscious of its unchallengeable competence, the Corps of Nobody's Children 'proceeds to carry on.' It is the one and only corps of long-service scientific soldiers in the British Empire. It takes the whole world for its province, and its deeds have encircled the globe with a wreath of laurel.

It has been my privilege to study, at close hand, this strange exclusive body of sea-soldiers, to live in intimate fellowship with them, to understand something of their pride, and to be remotely yet genuinely a partaker in that pride. Whenever—and this has happened not infrequently—I have been made free of the Royal Marines, I have always felt that I was coming among my own people. I am allied to them by the closest ties of blood, and the bond holds. And because I understand something of the corps, in so far as one who is outside can understand, I venture to interpret here its essential spirit, in its weakness and in its strength—its incomparable strength.

There is little in common between a huge short-service Army, however efficient it may be within the restricted limits of its training, and the long-service professional Navy, and the equally long-service and professional corps of Royal Marines. The distinction lies in just that one word 'professional.' The old Regular Army, which came by its glorious end at Ypres, has ceased to exist. It died in doing what it was brought into being to do; and, though dead, will live eternally in our history. Yet even this Army was not professional in the widest sense. The officers, and some few among the non-commissioned ranks, gave up their whole lives to its service; but the bulk of the men were birds of passage between the active list and the reserve. Their term of full service was short. Whatever may be the traditions of a regiment, however much it may develop through the centuries a corporate sense of undying unity,

¹ Copyright in the United States of America, by Bennet Copplestone, 1919.

it never can realise that actual unity of mind and heart and body which comes to fruition in a professional service.

Though of the Navy, and officially controlled through their Adjutant-General by the Admiralty, the Royal Marines are soldiers, not sailors. They have the handiness, and something more than the handiness, of sailors; yet they are, in spirit and outlook, soldiers. They trace their modern history from the formation of the Maritime Regiment of Foot in 1664; but, to my mind, the central idea to which they owe their being is as old as the world's naval history. For many centuries, even for thousands of years, up to times almost of yesterday, ships were sailed by seamen and fought by soldiers. Three hundred years ago it was thought natural, even proper, to send a professional soldier to sea in command of a fleet. Robert Blake was a colonel, the Duke of Albemarle was General Monk, and Prince Rupert was—you know all about Prince Rupert. Sir Edward Cecil, who muddled the Cadiz Expedition so badly in 1625, did not know one end of the ship from the other. It was not until well into the eighteenth century that seamen fought the ships which they sailed. The sea-borne soldiers did not wholly disappear, but instead of being casual regiments, embarked for sea service, they became crystallised into a specially trained corps of Royal Marines. Soldiers could not be dispensed with afloat—their services were needed as 'landing parties' in peace and in war—many times Cook's marines stood between their captain and the savage death which at last overtook him—and for another queer reason, which the passage of years has made superfluous. The marines carried on board ship were the Guard, which berthed and messed between the officers and the crew of seamen. They were a stalwart and faithful insurance against mutiny, and to this day the tradition of this duty remains, to this day their 'barracks' on board ship are set as a perpetual barrier between the naval officers and the naval men.

Marines are soldiers, all kinds of soldiers, and many other things which soldiers never have been and never will be. In them the furious warrior and the domestic angel coalesce. They are highly trained infantrymen, skilled gunners in every man-killing instrument from maxims and trench mortars to naval fifteen-inch; they are more than tolerable engineers; they will move any weight any distance with any tackle—they call this mystery the art of 'repository.' They will turn any arid unfriendly spot into a bit of Old England, bright with flowers and fruitful in vegetables.

They are housemaids of an excellence undreamed of by house-mistresses; they are the most perfect of body-servants; their divisional bands rival those of the Guards—and the floor of every sea, and the soil of every land, is rich with their bodies slain in fight. As they serve faithfully, so they fight terribly.

Small as is the Corps—so small that at sea it is usually lost to public sight in the Navy, and on land its deeds are part of the exploits of the Army—yet it is still officially two corps, and by tradition and practice is divisible into four. The original Woolwich Battalion has given birth to the haughtily scientific Royal Marine Artillery at Eastney, and the no less haughty three divisions of the Royal Marine Light Infantry at Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth. I am, by circumstance, impartial—a son of mine serves in each branch of the Royal Corps, and it happily does not fall to me to declare a preference for a branch or a division. The R.M.A. has long since made up its own serene mind. It allows that the R.M.L.I. approaches its efficiency but that the gap between, though narrow, is deep as the hell which both branches face unflinching, side by side. The Light Infantry are also free from doubt, though they will admit—say, after mess, when tongues wag—that the R.M.A. takes a lot of beating. The three divisions of R.M.L.I. have their own separate identities, though their traditions tend to become merged. Each one is manifestly superior to the other two in those fine points which are the acid test of military competence. Upon one sore subject all are agreed—that the Portsmouth Division's Forton Barracks at Gosport are a disgrace to a self-respecting corps. Experts dare not lay on electric light lest the crazy walls should collapse, and the number of times the buildings have been condemned as insanitary passes counting. That Eastney Barracks, which bravely front Spithead, are by far the best, and that Forton Barracks are by far the worst, are axioms which do not permit of controversy.

The Light Infantry, whatever they may say, are very proud of the R.M.A., and the Artillery, while abating none of their superior claims, would sooner go into battle alongside the Light Infantry than with ten times their number of any other troops in the world. There is really very little difference between the two branches, which ere long are expected to be merged into one. The greater part of their training is on parallel lines. At one end of the scale, the Light Infantry specialise in infantry work; at the other end, the Artillery know more of the higher flights of gunnery. For the rest—and it is for nine-tenths of their man-killing duty—the

Artillery and the Light Infantry are interchangeable. To both, the Navy is by tradition—and I am afraid with some justice—held to be a jealous stepmother, who favours her own children. The Royal Marines have been cast without father or mother upon the cold official world. They are 'Nobody's Children.' Their barracks are under the Army Act, so that they may pay duty on their stores, and their separation allowances were—until quite recently—those of the Navy, because that scale was the lower. But though buffeted between the Navy and the Army, sharing the perils of both, and denied most of the privileges of either, the unquenchable spirit of the Corps shines out the brighter. If sometimes it can play off the Navy against the Army, or the Army against the Navy, it chuckles joyously. Of its stepmother, the Navy, it is darkly suspicious. 'When we are amalgamated,' mutter the Light Infantry, not without secret satisfaction, 'the Admiralty will turn the R.M.A. out of Eastney and take it over as Naval barracks.' 'But what will then happen to the R.M.A.?' asked an inquiring civilian. 'Forton,' was the answer. And after what I have told you of the R.M.A., of the glories of Eastney, and of the dilapidations of Forton, you will understand how delicious was that answer—to the palates of the R.M.L.I.

In peace as in war the Royal Corps, like the Royal Navy, is always on active service. The Armistice, though it brought relief to the temporary and unprofessional auxiliaries, left the heart and purpose of the Corps unchanged. It held the forts of the Dardanelles, it occupied the famous Allied base at Mudros, it was frozen in winter and scorched in summer in the northern fastnesses of Russia, it was ubiquitously pervasive in the Black Sea and in the Baltic. In the great ships of the Fleet, whether in reserve squadrons or ranging as of old the high seas of the world, the Corps supplied its accustomed quota. And at home the Divisional Headquarters buzzed with active life, gathering in recruits, training and polishing, always training and polishing, so that when the call came—and in peace as in war the call is never long in coming—the answer might be instant and convincing. It is remorselessly continuous, the life of a Professional Corps of 'Nobody's Children.'

In times of peace a corps of long-service soldiers, trained to such niceties of finish that it may instantly play its part by land or by sea anywhere, trained and polished so that the more bleakly impossible the job, the more surely and inevitably the Royal

Marines are charged to tackle it, a corps such as this one is not cheaply come by. With its recruit depot at Walmer, that grey line of barracks which overlooks the famous Downs, the red masses of Eastney, the solid granite blocks of Plymouth, the old buildings of Chatham, and the dilapidated Forton, measured by accommodation and numbers, it is a corps costly in its maintenance. The unit system is carried very far, surprisingly far. Though the Corps is essentially one, each Headquarters has its own individual life and is economically self-contained. Each Headquarters maintains its own staff, makes its own clothes and its own boots—at urgent call, it will equip its own men for the Arctic Seas or the blazing Tropics—it runs blacksmiths' and carpenters' shops; when land, happily, is at its service, it will indulge the conviction of all its officers and men that Nature has designed them for the peaceful pursuit of agriculture. Flowers and fruit follow the Royal Corps around the world. Wherever it may be cast during a season of growth—among the ungrateful rocks of Scapa, the gracious glens of the Greek Islands, or the richly manured horse-lines of Flanders—the earth blossoms under its hands. The Corps prints its own Divisional Orders, maintains its own Divisional Band at a high pitch of excellence, and supplies actors, scenery, and music for its own Divisional Theatres. This self-contained unit system is expensive to the Government, the officers, and the men. The life of a professional corps must be a full life, efficiency is no less dependent upon organised relaxation than upon organised work, and many very valuable stimulations to interest, for which an obdurate and unimaginative Treasury will not pay, the officers—and to some extent the men also—must pay for themselves. When Europe drowns in peace, though the flame of war may be flickering in a dozen distant corners of the world and the Marines, as always, may be stamping their great boots upon it, Whitehall invariably grumbles and inquires, 'Of what manner of use are these Marines of ours, which cost us so much good money? What are they but survivals of the dark ages of militarism?' To which enquiries the Treasury promptly supplies its own answer—for the Royal Corps are Nobody's Children, with only a stepmother who has a large and hungry naval family of her own to support—the Treasury supplies its own answer, and prunes solid chunks off the Corps' establishment. Time and again during the long spells of European peace the Corps has wasted into a shadow, and what has happened in the past will probably happen again in the future.

But when peace breaks up, and the vast storms of war sweep through the world, the Royal Corps enjoys its silent revenge. Gone instantly are the foolish pleas upon which its numbers and equipment have lately been cut down. Gone are all doubts of its pre-eminent usefulness. For here, to hand, is a compact highly-trained body of sea-soldiers, and much more than sea-soldiers, a Corps of Improvisors, to whom no job however remote and forbidding is impossible of fulfilment. A Corps, too, which, by reason of its organised self-containing Headquarters, can call in reserves and train them, can rapidly select promising recruits and train them too, can furnish supplies and equip the part which is new with some of that lore of world-wide experience which is the tradition of the part which is old. A Corps which can quickly double itself, and then, by taking thought, proceed to the process of indefinite multiplication, by three, by four, by five, by six. The Royal Corps cannot expand so quickly as a purely land army, for the range and standard of its training are by far more exacting, but give it time in reasonable measure and it will graft upon the old stock new growths, which will in turn engraft buds still newer, until at the end what was at the beginning a stunted neglected bush will have flourished into a great and mighty tree. And it will be a tree through whose branches flows the rich sap of the old imperishable stock, the sap of the old proud corps of 'Nobody's Children.'

This is precisely what happened in the war of nations which, after raging for four years, still splutters in Eastern Europe. At the beginning, the Royal Corps afloat and on land numbered 18,234 of all ranks. At the date of the Armistice, the numbers had been multiplied by three and reached 58,339. Many new branches had been grafted on to the old stock, and that stock itself had grown vigorously from its old deep roots. During the first two years of war the recruits were of a very fine type, and were jealously selected. Most of them had education and skill in civil life. They were all volunteers—artisans, farmers, schoolmasters, police, shopkeepers—all very keen and quick to learn, and the ancient repute of the Corps proved safe in their young hands. So carefully were they chosen, and so thoroughly did they assimilate the teaching which was lavished upon them, that in character as in valour they proved their worth. When, at the end, those who remained alive came to be demobilised it was found that nearly all—ninety-eight per cent.—had no black mark upon their record. Of the others, after the

drag-net of general service had been put through the country, there was inevitably some falling off in quality.

By little significant touches here and there, by discursive yet always deliberate periphrasis, I am trying to convey from my mind to yours a series of impressions. I am seeking to make clear that with the Royal Corps, as with the Royal Navy, it is the spirit and tradition which counts. Picture to yourself a long-service corps of officers and men, living always in proud self-centred isolation, a corps which never operates as a whole, but always by detachments. 'We are a Service of Detachments,' said one war-battered officer to me, a phrase illuminating much and explanatory of much. The detachments, large or small—of thousands, as in Gallipoli and France—of a hundred or so, as in the great ships of the Grand Fleet—of scores, and even of single units, when on special service—are always marines of the stamp of Eastney or of Forton, of Chatham or of Plymouth. Wherever they go, they take with them a bit of their own Headquarters, which, to each of them, is conspicuously superior to all other Headquarters. They take with them, too, that ingrained ineradicable confidence in their own self-sufficiency which is a sure solvent of every obstacle. If their tools are insufficient, or ill-suited to the job in hand, they instantly invent and make others. If they are denied new guns, they contentedly make shift with old ones; if wheels, or limbers, or bolts, are lacking, what matter? They supply the vacant space with something—rough may be, yet all-competent to the work in hand. Just as the Corps is a nucleus, so every detachment is in turn a nucleus. Flung upon its own resources in some remote spot of the wide world, it collects about it a band of followers and helpers, white or black or yellow, any colour or no colour, it conveys to these motley gangs something of its own spirit and its own skill. Except, perhaps, in the lavishly equipped ships of the Fleet, the Corps is always improvising, always doing successfully with ten men tasks before which fifty men of other stamp would dissolve into helpless tears. The self-sufficiency from which springs confidence is always the parent of hope. The unofficial motto of this Corps of Improvisors, this Service of Detachments, might be chosen from the 'Pantomime Rehearsal'—'It will be all right on the night!' There is a Joss which watches jealously the efforts of men. It tests and tries them, sets at naught their best endeavours. If their hearts fail, even by a little, it remains obdurately hostile to the end. But if they remain steadfast, if they know not the meaning of 'impossible,' that Joss will

smile and soften, and pluck with his own hands success from failure. The Marines have a Joss of their own; he usually has his coat off, and is under their strict orders. He has to bestir himself and labour mightily under that stern mastership.

The Corps of Royal Marines seems to me to be agreeably characteristic of the British Empire, which the gentle German found so exasperatingly in his way. The Corps pervades the earth and the sea, not upon any settled plan—it just happens to be there. With Cook and Anson and Ross, the Marines went and landed, and stuck up flags, and presented arms, and it was so. Wherever they landed then, you will see red spots on the map now. The Corps is the bridge which connects sea and land everywhere. On the sea, one finds Marines, and on land one finds them, and between, with one foot on land and the other knee-deep in water, one finds them too. If I could paint a symbolical picture, I should paint a private of the Corps just like this, with one foot on land and the other in the water—sticking up a little flag. ‘During the war,’ said a Marine officer, ‘I had occasion to go by train through Italy and on to Mudros. At Boulogne the first man I met was a Marine private, orderly to the Naval Transport Officer. He looked after my gear and got me a berth in the train. At the Italian frontier, the first man I met was a Marine private who was orderly to the Railway Transport Officer. Then, at my journey’s end, at Mudros a Marine Intelligence Officer came on board, carried me off and made everything sweet with the Governor of the Port, who was another Marine. It is the same at Archangel and on the Murman Coast, at Port Said and in the Persian Gulf; the Marines are the bridge ’twixt sea and land.’ ‘I have called you “Nobody’s Children,”’ said I smiling, ‘and a “Corps of Improvisors” and a “Service of Detachments.” Must I also call you a “Corps of Bridges”?’

This ‘Corps of Bridges,’ this ‘Service of Detachments,’ scattered over the wide world is always and inevitably *in* everything. Did they place upon their colours any word of battles or sieges—in addition to that proud solitary ‘Gibraltar’—there would not be room left for the Union crosses. It is much more easy, in any of our wars, to say where they were not than where they served. It is not quite correct to say that throughout the Great War they were, as detachments, on every front by land and sea, though so wide a generalisation stretches but by a little the strict limits of

truth. They were not, except as individual units on special duty, in Mesopotamia, though they played their part in the Persian Gulf. For a while I thought that they had not borne a share in the defence of Egypt, but in this I found myself to be wrong. In true improvising fashion, they equipped and ran those coast defences which, when German submarine activity swelled into a world-wide threat, preserved inviolate our main base for the Mediterranean operations. It was an unexciting, yet most important, duty. Very many of Nobody's Children's tasks are unexciting, though they never are unimportant.

If we set aside land campaigning in Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia—in which the Corps was represented by individual officers and men, though not by detachments—the Corps of Improvisors was everywhere, by land and sea: and was especially, peculiarly, and most appropriately, in that middle region, 'twixt land and sea, which is their own unchallenged province.

I will, later on in these articles, condescend upon particulars. For the moment, I am using a wide free brush. In all the great ships of the Fleet, and in many which were less great, both branches of the Royal Corps fought big turret-guns and side-batteries, and set the pace to the seamen both in speed and accuracy. Not infrequently a grave long-service Marine Gunner 'directed' the fire of a whole ship. With Beatty's squadron, and with Jellicoe's Grand Fleet at Jutland, there were nearly six thousand of them—5,922 to be precise—they went to their deaths with their brother seamen in the *Queen Mary*, the *Indefatigable*, the *Invincible*, the *Defence*, and the *Black Prince*. They suffered heavy losses in the *Lion* and *Malaya*. They were in all the actions of the Battle Cruiser squadrons, and helped Sturdee at the Falkland Islands to wipe up the mess of Coronel, and to avenge those of the Corps who went to the bottom with Craddock. Through long months and years, they bore their full burden of the weary patrols in the North Sea, the Atlantic, and the Cape waters. With the merchantmen, armed both for offence and defence, went the Marines with their guns, and very often they were the only gunners in a whole ship's company untrained for war. They did no service in submarines—this is a Naval show—but they were not, as individuals, absent from the famous 'Q' boats. Their sea work was mainly done at the two ends of the naval scale—as turret and side-battery gunners in big ships and as solitary defenders of armed merchant ships. Marines are soldier-gunners, not seamen, and so we do not

find them in the destroyers or in the submarines in which the seamen of the Navy take their savage delight.

All through the War, whenever it was sought to bridge sea and land, the Corps of Bridges came into its own. Their most typical as well as most famous service was, of course, Zeebrugge. It was exactly the desperate kind of bridging for which they had been devoted and trained, and officers and men, picked volunteers, went to it as to a rich feast. The landing of Marines upon the immortal Mole was typical in that it was a sacrifice, a diversion, technically a minor operation, designed to distract the energies of the enemy while the main sea operation—blocking the Canal—was carried through by seamen. And Nobody's Children, who for this great purpose were sacrificed, and were proud to be sacrificed, rate Zeebrugge as the supreme 'Marine Show,' because it was so exactly typical of their peculiar functions. It is no small thing, my friends, that the Empire should possess a long-service devoted Corps which glories in being sacrificed.

But though Zeebrugge was the greatest of all Marine shows, in the art of bridging sea and land, there were many others. On March 4, 1915, two battalions of Royal Marine Light Infantry went ashore at Seddul Bahr and Kum Kale—where they were badly cut up—and had ten thousand of them then been at hand and available, they would have taken the whole Gallipoli Peninsula six weeks before those bloody landings of which the ultimate issue was glorious failure. When one looks back now, in cool blood, upon the whole series of Mediterranean operations, one sees how the War might have been shortened by whole years. Two blunders stand out. First, the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* to Constantinople, and then the failure to follow them up by our squadron while Turkey was still nominally at peace with us. That was the costliest of all blunders, the costliest in blood and treasure, of the entire War. Secondly, the failure to have at hand, and available on March 4, 1915, a sufficient force to have landed and taken Gallipoli after the sea bombardment and before the Turks and their German allies had secured six weeks within which to make good the defence of the Peninsula. It could have been done. Ten thousand of Nobody's Children could have done it easily; twenty thousand of less highly trained soldiers would not have failed to do it.

Few better illustrations of the improvising quality of the Corps, and of its use as the flexible bridge between sea and land, could be desired than the story of the detachments in German South-West

and East Africa. For the first, they swept up any old gun, of any calibre, on any old field-carriage—often with none, until something had been improvised. They trained gunners in South Africa, and finally, after many toils and disappointments, brought up their heavy batteries to underline powerfully the conditions of surrender. 'If you don't surrender,' said Botha to the German commander, 'my heavy guns will begin to talk.' The Germans laughed, they did not believe that siege-guns could be hauled over hundreds of miles of waterless desert. But when invited to come and see for themselves, they shuddered—and surrendered. In East Africa, there was no clean finish, though the labour was greater, and the toll of life from sickness much heavier. As in South-West Africa, the trouble was to find an enemy upon whom to exact compensation for toil and loss.

At the moment when the Royal Marine Light Infantry was sweeping over the Mole of Zeebrugge, and naval ships were seeking to block Ostend, the great siege-guns of the Royal Marine Artillery, strung out along the Flanders coast, were thundering in support. They could not reach Zeebrugge; but they could and did insistently occupy the attention of the Tirpitz and Hindenburg batteries at Ostend, and played long bowls with their old friend Leeugenboom, whose sport it was to shell Dunkirk from 50,000 yards away. With siege-guns in Flanders, in harbour defence batteries at Scapa and Cromarty, in splendid isolation at St. Helena, hauling aged four-point-sevens up mountain slopes in the West Indies, wherever guns and gunners were wanted, Nobody's Children made them good. When Admiral Troubridge went to Belgrade, in that last effort to save Serbia from being overrun, R.M.A. gunners went with him, and with him did their utmost to stop the Austrian flood. Their lost guns took heavy toll before they were engulfed, and the guns' crews passed through that terrible retreat to the coast which is, perhaps, the most tragical story in a war which is full of such tragedies. It was more than the retreat of an army; it was the retreat of a nation.

Though the services of the Royal Marines were infinite in variety, by far the greater number of the men, more especially of the newer elements, were employed as infantry. The old hands became experts at Lewis guns and Stokes trench-mortars. As infantry, the Corps fought in Belgium, in Gallipoli, and in France. I remember one gloomy afternoon in the late summer of 1914, when seated in the editorial chair of an important newspaper, word was brought to me

that a Royal Marine brigade had landed at Ostend. The Germans were pressing through Belgium, and in those days we caught at straws. What more natural than that the gallant Marines should hold Ostend upon the German flank, and pass through it those hordes of fabulous Russians which just then were sweeping to our help? The Higher Powers were not unwilling at that time to encourage the Russian fable, and perhaps the Marine landing at Ostend helped to give it a glimmer of verisimilitude. I don't know that it served any other purpose; there were more of German divisions in Belgium than of companies in that little force. It was withdrawn, and four battalions of R.M.L.I. under General Sir A. Paris made a forlorn descent upon Antwerp, lined the trenches, were driven back through the blazing city, and composed the ultimate rear-guard in the final evacuation. It was an expedition hastily flung together, a haphazard muddled show of which the Corps does not talk very much. Gallipoli was more serious business. Historically, the Marines were the first English troops to land on the Peninsula—they were six weeks ahead of any other—and they were in the last rear-guard when Cape Helles was abandoned. In the meanwhile, four battalions of R.M.L.I. had served with the Royal Naval Division through that sad campaign, and sorely reduced in strength were afterwards transferred to France.

The Marines who served in Gallipoli originally amounted to four infantry battalions, but by July 1915 they had been so far reduced that the four became two, officially known as the First and Second Battalions of R.M.L.I. As two battalions they passed on to France, but by the autumn of 1917 the First Battalion had disappeared—used up, dead—and the survivors of the First and the Second were combined as the 'Second.' The Third Battalion occupied Mudros, and from it were drawn those gun detachments which, at the Armistice with Turkey, took over the forts of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. The Fourth was the Battalion of Zeebrugge. It was formed for that service, trained for that service, and no small part of it died in that service. There is never going to be another 'Fourth Battalion' of Royal Marines. It began with Zeebrugge, and ended with Zeebrugge, and no other battalion of the Royal Corps will bear the number. Wars will come again, I fear, and the Royal Corps will serve in them as it always does in all wars, big and little. First and Second and Third Battalions will add more honours to

their records, and maybe there will again be a Fifth and Sixth and Seventh. But the Fourth Battalion will always remain the battalion of Zeebrugge. There were, by the way, Fifth and Sixth Battalions in the war. The Fifth was trained for special service to man floating forts between Dungeness and Cape Grisnez, but the Armistice brought the scheme to nought as it brought many others. In the autumn of 1918, the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Hotel Cecil were bubbling over with beautiful schemes for the final confounding of the Hun. The Sixth is the battalion of Archangel, whither it was sent this summer to extricate the British troops tied up on the Dvina. A Seventh was formed temporarily, but has now been dispersed.

So far, I have tried to show what the 'Corps of Nobody's Children' is, and how it serves, by sea and by land, and forms the mobile and always dependable Bridge by which the power of the sea joins up with the power of the land. So far, I have sketched in the outline of the picture which I have set myself to draw. In my next article, if my pen holds true, I will faithfully fill in some detail.

(To be continued.)

THE GREAT HOUSE.

A STORY OF QUIET TIMES.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A TURN OF THE WHEEL.

AUDLEY was suspicious and ill at ease. Standing on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire, he fixed the visitor with his eyes, and with secret anxiety asked himself what he wanted. The possibility that Basset came to champion Mary had crossed his mind more than once; if that were so he would soon dispose of him! In the meantime he took civility for his cue, exchanged an easy word or two about the poll and the election, and between times he nodded to Stubbs to be seated. Through all, his eyes were watchful and he missed nothing.

'I asked Mr. Stubbs to be here,' he said, when a minute or two had been spent in this by-play, 'as you spoke of business. You don't object?'

'Not at all,' Basset replied. His face was grave. 'I should tell you at once, Audley,' he added, 'that my mission is not a pleasant one.'

The other raised his eyebrows. 'You are sure that it concerns me?'

'It certainly concerns you. Though, as things stand, not very materially. I knew nothing of the matter myself until three o'clock to-day, and at first I doubted if it was my duty to communicate it. But the facts are known to a third person, they may be used to annoy you in the future, and though the task is unpleasant, I decided that I had no option.'

Audley set his broad shoulders against the mantelshelf. 'But if the facts don't affect me?' he said.

'In a way they do. Not as they might under other circumstances. That is all.'

'And yet you are making our hair stand on end! I confess you puzzle me. Well, let us have it. What is it all about?'

'A little time ago you recovered, if you remember, your Family Bible.'

'Well? What of that?'

'I have just learned that the man did not hand over all that he had. He kept back—it now appears—certain papers.'

'Ah!' Audley's voice was stern. 'Well, he has had his chance. This time, I can promise him a warrant will follow.'

'Perhaps you will hear me out first?'

'No,' was the sharp reply. Audley's temper was getting the better of him. 'Last time, my dear fellow, you compounded with him; your motive an excellent one I don't doubt. But if he now thinks to get more money from me—and for other papers—I can promise him that he will see the inside of Stafford gaol. Besides, my good friend, you gave us to understand that he had surrendered all he had.'

'I am afraid I did, and I fear I was wrong. Why he deceived me, and has now turned about, I know no more than you do!'

'I think I can enlighten you,' the other answered, his fears as well as his temper aroused. 'The rogue is shallow. He thinks to be paid twice. Once by you and once by me. But you can tell him that this time he will be paid in other coin.'

'I'm afraid that there is more in it than that,' Basset said. 'The fact is the papers he now produces, Audley, are of another character.'

'Oh! The wind blows in that quarter does it?' my lord replied. 'You don't mean that you've come here—why, d—n it, man,' with sudden passion, 'either you are very simple, or you are art and part—'

'Steady, steady, my lord,' Stubbs said, interposing. 'Hitherto he had not spoken. 'There's no need to quarrel! I am sure that Mr. Basset's intentions are friendly. It will be better if he just tells us what these documents are which are now put forward. We shall then be able to judge where we stand.'

'Go ahead,' Audley said, averting his face and sulkily relapsing against the mantelshelf. 'Put your questions! And, for God's sake, let's get to the point!'

'The paper that is pertinent is a deed,' Basset explained. 'I have the heads of it here. A deed made between Peter Paravicini Audley, your ancestor, the Audley the date of whose marriage has been always in issue—between him on the one side, and his father and two younger brothers on the other.'

'What is the date?' Stubbs asked.

'Seventeen hundred and four.'

'Very good, Mr. Basset.' Stubbs's tone was now as even as he could make it, but an acute listener would have detected a change in it. 'Proceed, if you please.'

Before Basset could comply my lord broke in. 'What's the use of this? Why the d—l are we going into it?' he cried. 'If this man is out for plunder I will make him smart as sure as my name is Audley! And anyone who supports him. In the meantime I want to hear no more of it!'

Basset moved in his chair as if he would rise. Stubbs intervened.

'That is one way of looking at it, my lord,' he said temperately. 'And I'm not saying that it is the wrong way. But I think we had better hear what Mr. Basset has to say. He is probably deceived—'

'He has let himself be used as a catspaw!' Audley cried. His face was flushed and there was an ugly look in his eyes.

'But he means us well, I am sure,' the lawyer interposed. 'At present I don't see'—he turned and carefully snuffed one of the candles—'I don't see—'

'I think you do!' Basset answered. He had had a long day and he had come on an unpleasant business. His own temper was not too good. 'You see this, at any rate, Mr. Stubbs, that such a deed may be of vital import to your client.'

'To me?' Audley exclaimed. Was it possible that the thing he had so long feared—and had ceased to fear—was going to befall him? Was it possible that at the eleventh hour, when he had burnt his boats, when he had thought all danger at an end—no, it was impossible! 'To me?' he repeated passionately.

'Yes,' Basset replied. 'Or, rather, it would be of vital import to you in other circumstances.'

'In what other circumstances? What do you mean?'

'If you were not about to marry the only person who, with you, is interested.'

By a tremendous effort Audley cut short the execration that burst from his lips. His face, always too fleshy for his years, swelled till it was purple. Then, and as quickly, the blood ebbed, leaving it grey and flabby. He would have given much, very much at this moment to be able to laugh or to utter a careless word. But he could do neither. The blow had been too sudden, too heavy, too overwhelming. Only in his nightmares had he seen what he saw now!

Meanwhile Stubbs, startled by the half-uttered oath and a little out of his depth—for he had heard nothing of the engagement—intervened. ‘I think, my lord,’ he said, ‘you had better leave this to me. I think you had, indeed. We are quite in the dark and we are not getting forward. Let us have the facts, Mr. Basset. What is the gist of this deed? Or, first, have you seen it?’

‘I have.’

‘And read it?’

‘I have.’

‘It appears to you—I only say it appears—to be genuine?’

‘I have no doubt that it is genuine,’ Basset replied. ‘It bears the marks of age, and it was found in the chest with the old Bible. If the book is genuine—’

The lawyer raised his hand. ‘Too fast,’ he said. ‘You say it was found! You mean that this man says it was found?’

‘Yes.’

‘Precisely. But there is a difference. Still, we have cleared the ground. Now, what does this deed purport to be?’

Basset produced a slip of paper. ‘An agreement,’ he read from it, ‘between Peter Paravicini Audley and his father and his two younger brothers. After admitting that the entry of the marriage in the register is misleading and that no marriage took place until after the birth of his son, Peter Paravicini undertakes that, in consideration of his father and his brothers taking no action and making no attack upon his wife’s reputation, she being their cousin, he will not set up for the said son, or the issue of the said son, any claim to the title or estates.’

Audley listened to the description, so clear and so precise, and he recognised that it tallied with the deed which tradition had always held to exist but of which John Audley had been able to give no proof. He heard, he understood; yet while he listened and understood, his mind was working to another end, and viewing with passion the tragedy which fate had prepared for him. Too late! Too late! Had this become known a week, only a week, earlier, how lightly had the blow fallen! How impotently! But he had cut the rope, he had severed the strands once carefully twisted, that bound him to safety! And then the irony, the bitterness, the cruelty of those words of Basset’s, ‘in other circumstances!’ They bit into his mind.

Still he suffered in silence, and only his stillness and his unhealthy colour betrayed the despair that gripped and benumbed

his soul. Stubbs did not look at him; perhaps he was careful not to look at him. The lawyer sat thinking and drumming gently with his fingers on the table. 'Just so, just so,' he said presently. 'On the face of it, the document of which Mr. John Audley tried to give secondary evidence, and which a person fraudulently inclined would of course concoct. That touch of the cousin well brought in!'

'But the lady was his cousin,' Basset said.

'All the world knows it,' the lawyer retorted coolly, 'and use has been made of the knowledge. But, of course, there are a hundred things to be proved before any weight can be given to this document; its origin, the custody from which it comes, the signatures, the witnesses. Its production by a man who has once endeavoured to blackmail is alone suspicious. And the deed itself is at variance with the evidence of the Bible.'

'But that variance bears out the deed, which is to secure the younger sons' rights while covering the reputation of the lady.'

The lawyer shook his head. 'Very clever,' he said. 'But, frankly, the matter has an ugly look, Mr. Basset.'

'Lord Audley says nothing,' Basset replied, nettled by the lawyer's phrase.

'And will say nothing,' Stubbs rejoined genially, 'if he is advised by me. In the circumstances, as I understand them, he is not affected as he might be; but this is still a serious matter. We are not quarrelling with you for coming to us, Mr. Basset. On the contrary. But I would like to know why the man came to you.'

'The answer is simple,' Basset explained. 'I am Mr. Audley's executor. On his account, I am obliged to be interested. The moment I learned this I saw that, be it true or false, I must disclose it to Miss Audley. But I thought it fair to open it to Lord Audley first that he might tell the young lady himself, if he preferred to do so.'

Stubbs nodded. 'Very proper,' he replied. 'And where, in the meantime, is this—precious document?'

'I lodged it with Mr. Audley's bankers this afternoon.'

Stubbs nodded again. 'Also very proper,' he said. 'Just so.'

Basset rose. 'I've told you what I know. If there is nothing more?' he said. He looked at Audley, who had turned his back on them and, with his hands in his pockets and one foot on the fender, was gazing into the fire.

'I think that's all,' Stubbs hastened to say. 'I am sure that

his lordship is obliged to you, Mr. Basset, though it is a hundred to one that there is nothing in this.'

At that, however, Audley turned about. He had pulled himself together, and his manner was excellent. 'I would like to say that for myself,' he said frankly, 'I owe you many thanks for the straightforward course you have taken, Basset. You must pardon my momentary annoyance. Perhaps you will kindly keep this business to yourself for—shall we say—three days? I will speak myself to my cousin, but I should like to make one or two inquiries first.'

Basset agreed willingly. He hated the whole thing and his part in it. It forced him to champion, or to seem to champion, Mary against her betrothed; and set him in that kind of opposition to his rival which he loathed. It was only after some hesitation that he had determined to see Audley, and now that he had seen him, the sooner he was clear of the matter the happier he would be. So, 'Certainly,' he repeated, thinking that the other was taking it very well. 'And now, as I have had a hard day, I will say good-night.'

'Good-night, and believe me,' my lord added warmly, 'we recognise the friendliness of your action.'

Outside, in the darkness of the road, Basset drew a breath of relief. He had had a hard day and he was utterly weary. But he had come now, thank God, to an end of many things; of the canvass he had detested and the contest in which he had been beaten, of his relations with Mary, whom he had lost, of this imbroglio, which he hated, of Riddelsley and the Gatehouse and the old life there! He could go to his inn and sleep the clock round. In his bed he would be safe, he would be free from troubles. It seemed to him a refuge. Till the morrow he need think of nothing, and when he came forth again it would be to a new life. Henceforth Blore, his old house and his starved acres must bound his ambitions. With the money which John Audley had left him he would dig and drain and fence and build, and be by turns Talpa the mole and Castor the beaver. In time, as he began to see the fruit of his toil, he would win to some degree of content, and be glad, looking back, that he had made this trial of his powers, this essay towards a wider usefulness. So, in the end, he would come through to peace.

But at this point the current of his thoughts eddied against Toft, and he cursed the man anew. Why had he played these tricks? Why had he kept back this paper? Why had he produced it now and cast on others this unpleasant task?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TOFT'S LITTLE SURPRISE.

TOFT had gone into Riddsley on the polling-day, but had returned before the result was known. 'What the man was thinking of,' his wife declared in wrath, 'beats me! To be there hours and hours and come out no wiser than he went, and we waiting to hear—a babe would ha' had more sense! The young master that we've known all our lives, to be in or out, and we to know nothing till morning! It passes patience!'

Mary had her own feelings, but she concealed them. 'He must know how it was going when he left?' she said.

'He doesn't know an identical thing!' Mrs. Toft replied. 'And all he'd say was, "There, there, what does it matter?" For all the world as if he spoke to a child! "What else matters, man?" says I. "What did you go for?" But there, Miss, he's beyond me these days! I believe he's going like the poor master, that had a bee in his bonnet, God forgive me for saying it! But what'd one not say, and we to wait till morning not knowing whether those plaguy Repealers are in or out!'

'But Mr. Basset is for Repeal,' Mary said.

'What matter what he's for, if he's in?' Mrs. Toft replied loftily. 'But to wait till morning to know—the man's no better than a numps!'

In the end, it was Mr. Colet who brought the news to the Gatehouse. He brought it to Etruria and so much of moment with it that before noon the election result had been set aside as a trifle, and Mary found herself holding a kind of court in the parlour—Mr. Colet plaintiff, Etruria defendant, Mrs. Toft counsel for the defence. Absence had but strengthened Mr. Colet's affection, and he came determined to come to an understanding with his mistress. He saw his way to making a small income by writing sermons for his more indolent brethren, and, in the meantime, Mr. Basset was giving him food and shelter; in return he was keeping Mr. Basset's accounts, and he was saving a little, a very little, money. But the body of his plea rested not on these counts, but on the political change. Repeal was in the air, repeal was in the country. Vote as Riddsley might, the Corn Laws were doomed. His opinions

would no longer be banned ; they would soon be the opinions of the majority, and with a little patience he might find a new curacy. When that happened he wished to marry Etruria.

‘ And why not ? ’ Mary asked.

‘ I will never marry him to disgrace him,’ Etruria replied. She stood with bowed head, her hands clasped before her, her beautiful eyes lowered.

‘ But you love him ? ’ Mary said, blushing at her own words.

‘ If I did not love him I might marry him,’ Etruria rejoined. ‘ I am a servant, my father’s a servant. I should be wronging him, and he would live to know it.’

‘ To my way o’ thinking, ’Truria’s right,’ her mother said. ‘ I never knew good come of such a marriage ! He’s poor, begging his reverence’s pardon, but, poor or rich, his place is there.’ She pointed to the table. ‘ And ’Truria’s place is behind his chair.’

‘ But you forget,’ Mary said, ‘ that, when she is Mr. Colet’s wife her place will be by his side.’

‘ And much good that’ll do him with the parsons and such like, as are all gleg together ! If he’s in their black books for preaching too free—and when you come to tithes one parson is as like another as pigs o’ the same litter—he’ll not better himself by taking such as Etruria, take my word for it, Miss !’

‘ I will never do it,’ said Etruria.

‘ But,’ Mary protested, ‘ Mr. Colet need not live here, and in another part people will not know what his wife has been. Etruria has good manners and some education, Mrs. Toft, and what she does not know she will learn. She will be judged by what she is. If there is a drawback, it is that such a marriage will divide her from you and from her father. But if you are prepared for that ?’

Mrs. Toft rubbed her nose. ‘ We’d be willing if that were all,’ she said. ‘ She’d come to us sometimes, and there’d be no call for us to go to her.’

Mr. Colet looked at Etruria. ‘ If Etruria will come to me,’ he said, ‘ I will be ashamed neither of her nor her parents.’

‘ Bravely said ! ’ Mary cried.

‘ But there’s more to it than that,’ Mrs. Toft objected. ‘ A deal more. Mr. Colet nor ’Truria can’t live upon air. And it’s my opinion that if his reverence gets a curacy, he’ll lose it as soon as it’s known who his wife is. And he can’t dig and he can’t beg, and where’ll they be with the parsons all sticking to one another as close as wax ?’

'He'll not need them!' replied a new speaker, and that speaker was Toft. He had entered silently, none of them had seen him, and the interruption took them aback. 'He'll not need them,' he repeated, 'nor their curacies. He'll not need to dig nor beg. There's changes coming. There's changes coming for more than him, Miss. If Mr. Colet's willing to take my girl she'll not go to him empty handed.'

'I will take her as she stands,' Mr. Colet said, his eyes shining. 'She knows that.'

'Well, you'll take her, sir, asking your pardon, with what I give her,' Toft answered. 'And that'll be five hundred pounds that I have in hand, and five hundred more that I look to get. Put 'em together and they'll buy what's all one with a living, and you'll be your own rector and may snap your fingers at 'em!'

They stared at the man, while Mrs. Toft, in an awe-struck tone, cried, 'You're out of your mind, Toft! Five hundred pounds! Whoever heard of the like of us with that much money?'

'Silence, woman,' Toft said. 'You know naught about it.'

'But, Toft,' Mary said, 'are you in earnest? Do you understand what a large sum of money this is?'

'I have it,' the man replied, his sallow cheek reddening. 'I have it, and it's for Etruria.'

'If this be true,' Mr. Colet said slowly, 'I don't know what to say, Toft.'

'You've said all that is needful, sir,' Toft replied. 'It's long I've looked forward to this. She's yours, and she'll not come to you empty-handed, and you'll have no need to be ashamed of a wife that brings you a living. We'll not trouble except to see her at odd times in the year. It will be enough for her mother and me that she'll be a lady. She never was like us.'

'Hear the man!' cried Mrs. Toft between admiration and protest. 'You'd suppose she wasn't our child!'

But Mary went to him and gave him her hand. 'That's very fine, Toft,' she said. 'I believe Etruria will be as happy as she is good, and Mr. Colet will have a wife of whom he may be proud. But Etruria will not be Etruria if she forgets her parents or your gift. Only you are sure that you are not deceiving yourself?'

'There's my bank-book to show for half of it,' Toft replied. 'The other half is as certain if I live three months!'

'Well, I declare!' Mrs. Toft cried. 'If anybody'd told me yesterday that I'd have—' Etruria, ha'n't you got a word to say?'

Etruria's answer was to throw her arms round her father's neck. Yet it is doubtful if the moment was as much to her as to the ungainly, grim-visaged man, who looked so ill at ease in her embrace.

The contrast between them was such that Mary hastened to relieve the sufferer. 'Etruria will have more to say to Mr. Colet,' she said, 'than to us. Suppose we leave them to talk it over.'

She saw the Tofts out after another word or two, and followed them. 'Well, well, well!' said Mrs. Toft, when they stood in the hall. 'I'm sure I wish that everybody was as lucky this day—if all's true as Toft tells us.'

'There's some in luck that don't know it!' the man said oracularly. And he slid away.

'If he said black was white, I'd believe him after this,' his wife exclaimed, 'asking your pardon, Miss, for the liberties we've taken. But you'd always a fancy for 'Truria. Anyway, if there's one will be pleased to hear the news, it's the Squire! If I'd some of those nine here that voted against him I'd make their ears burn!'

'But perhaps they thought that Mr. Basset was wrong,' Mary said.

'What business had they o' thinking?' Mrs. Toft replied. 'They had ought to vote; that's enough for them.'

'Well, it does seem a pity,' Mary allowed. And then, because she fancied that Mrs. Toft looked at her with meaning, she went upstairs and, putting on her hat and cloak, went out. The day was cold and bright, a sprinkling of snow lay on the ground, and a walk promised her an opportunity of thinking things over. Between The Butterflies, at the entrance to the flagged yard, she hung a moment in doubt, then she set off across the park in the direction of the Great House.

At first her thoughts were busy with Etruria's fortunes and the mysterious windfall which had enriched Toft. How had he come by it? How could he have come by it? And was the man really sane? But soon her mind took another turn. She had strayed this way on the morning after her arrival at the Gatehouse, and, remembering this, she looked across the grey, frost-bitten park, with its rows of leafless trees and its naked vistas. Her mind travelled back to that happy morning, and involuntarily she glanced behind her.

But to-day no one followed her, no one was thinking of her. Basset was gone, gone for good, and it was she who had sent him

away. The May morning when he had hurried after her, the May sunshine, gay with the songs of larks and warm with the scents of spring were of the past. To-day she looked on a bare, cold landscape and her thoughts matched it. Yet she had no ground to complain, she told herself, no reason to be unhappy. Things might have been worse, ah! so much worse, she reflected. For a week ago she had been a captive, helpless, netted in her own folly! And now she was free.

Yes, she ought to be happy, being free; and, more than free, independent.

But she must go from here. And for many reasons the thought of going was painful to her. During the nine months which she had spent at the Gatehouse it had become a home. Its panelled rooms, its austerity, its stillness, the ancient woodlands about it were endeared to her by the memory of lamp-lit evenings and long summer days. The very plainness and solitude of the life, which had brought the Tofts and Etruria so near to her, had been a charm. And if her sympathy with her uncle had been imperfect, still he had been her uncle and he had been kind to her.

All this she must leave, and something else which she did not define; which was bound up with it, and which she had come to value when it was too late. She had taken brass for gold, and tin for silver! And now it was too late. So that it was no wonder that when she came to the hawthorn-tree where she had gathered her may that morning, a sob rose in her throat. She knew the tree! She had marked it often. But to-day there was no one to follow her, no one to call her back, no one to say that she should go no farther. Basset was gone, her uncle was dead.

Telling herself that, as she would never see it again, she would go as far as the Great House, she pushed on to the Yew Walk. Its recesses showed dark, and the darker for the sprinkling of snow that lay in the park. But it was high noon, there was nothing to fear, and she pursued the path until she came to the crumbling monster that tradition said was a butterfly.

She was still viewing it with awe, thinking now of the duel which had taken place there, now of her uncle's attack, when a bird moved in the copse and she glanced nervously behind her, expecting she knew not what. The dark yews shut her in, and involuntarily she shivered. What if, in this solitary place—and then through the silence the sharp click of the Iron Gate reached her ear.

The stillness and the associations shook her nerves. She heard footsteps and, hardly knowing what she feared, she slipped among the trees and stood half-hidden. A moment passed and a man appeared. He came from the Great House. He crossed the opening slowly, his chin sunk upon his breast, his eyes bent on the path before him. A moment and he was gone by the way she had come, without seeing her.

It was Lord Audley, and foolish as the impulse to hide herself had been, she blessed it. Nothing pleasant, nothing good, could have come of their meeting; and into her thoughts of him had crept so much of distaste that she was glad that she had not met him in this lonely spot. She went on to the Iron Gate, and viewed for a few moments the desolate lawn and the long, gaunt front. Then, reflecting that if she turned back at once she might meet him, she took a side-path through the plantation, and emerged on the park at another point.

She was careful not to reach home until late in the day and then she learned that he had called, that he had waited, and that in the end Toft had seen him; and that he had departed in no good temper. 'What Toft said to him,' Mrs. Toft reported, 'I know no more than the moon, but whatever it was his lordship marched off, Miss, as black as thunder.'

After that nothing happened, and of the four at the Gatehouse Etruria alone was content. Mrs. Toft was uneasy about the future—what were they going to do?—and perplexed by Toft's mysterious fortune—how had he come by it? Toft himself was on the rack, looking for things to happen, and nothing happened. And Mary knew that she must take action. She could not stay at the Gatehouse, she could not remain as the guest either of Basset or of Lord Audley.

But she did not know where to go, and no suggestion reached her. At length she wrote, two days after Lord Audley's visit, to Quebec Street, to the house where she had stayed with her father many years before. It was the only address of the kind that she knew. But she received no answer, and her heart sank. The difficulty, small as it was, harassed her; she had no adviser, and ten times a day, to keep up her spirits she had to tell herself that she was independent, that she had eight thousand pounds, that the whole world was open to her, and that compared with the penniless girl who had lived on the upper floor of the Hôtel Lambert she was fortunate!

But in the Hôtel Lambert she had had work to do, and here she had none!

She thought of taking rooms in Riddsley, but Lord Audley was there and she shrank from meeting him. She would wait another week for the answer from London, and then, if none came, she must decide what she would do. But in her room that night she thought that Basset had abandoned her, that he no longer cared, no longer desired to come near her, broke her down. Of course, he was not to blame. He fancied her still engaged to her cousin and receiving from him all the advice, all the help, all the love, she needed. He fancied her happy and content, in no need of him. And, alas! there was the pinch. She had written to him to tell him of her engagement. She could not write to him to tell him that it was at an end!

And then, by the morrow's post, there came a long letter from Basset, and in the letter the whole astonishing, overwhelming story of the discovery of the document which John Audley had sought so long, and in the end so disastrously.

'No doubt,' the writer added, 'Lord Audley has made you acquainted with the facts, but I think it my duty as your uncle's executor to lay them before you in detail and also to advise you that in your interest and in view of the change in your position—and in Lord Audley's—which this imports, it is proper that you should have independent advice.'

The blood ebbed and left Mary pale; it returned in a flood as with a bounding heart and shaking fingers she read and turned and re-read this letter. At last she understood and truly what astounding, what overwhelming news! What a shift of fortune! What a reversal of expectations! And how strangely, how singularly had all things shaped themselves to bring this about—were it true! Were it only true!

Unable to sit still, unable to control her excitement, she rose and paced the floor. If she were indeed Lady Audley! If this were indeed all hers! This dear house and the Great House! This which had seemed to its possessor so small, so meagre, so cramping an inheritance, but was to her fortune, an old name, a great place, a firm position in the world! A position that offered so many opportunities and so much power for good!

She walked the room with throbbing pulses, the letter now crushed in her hand, now smoothed out that she might assure herself of its meaning, might read again some word or some sentence,

might resolve some doubt. Oh, it was a wonderful, it was a marvellous, it was an incredible turn of fortune! And presently her mind began to deal with and to sift the past. And, enlightened, she understood many of the things that had perplexed her, and read many of the riddles that had baffled her. And her cheeks burned, her heart was hot with indignation.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE DEED OF RENUNCIATION.

BASSET moved in his chair. He was unhappy and ill at ease. He looked at the fire, he looked askance at Mary. 'But do you mean,' he said, 'that you knew nothing about this until you had my letter?'

'Nothing,' Mary answered; 'not a word.' She, too, found it more easy to look at the fire.

'You must have been very much surprised?' he said.

'I was. It was for that reason that I asked you to bring me the papers—to bring me everything, so that I might see for myself how it was.'

'I don't understand why Audley did not tell you. He said he would.'

It was the question Mary had foreseen and dreaded. She had slept two nights upon the letter and given a long day's thought to it, and she had made up her mind what she would do and how she would do it. But between the planning and the doing there were passages which she would fain have shunned, fain have omitted, had it been possible; and this was one of them. She saw that there was nothing else for it, however—the thing must be told, and told by her. She tried, and not without success, to command her voice. 'He did not tell me,' she said. 'Indeed I have not seen him. And I ought to say, Mr. Bassett, you ought to know in these circumstances—that the engagement between my cousin and myself is at an end.'

He may have started—he might well be astonished, in view of the business which brought him there. But he did not speak, and Mary could not tell what effect it had on him. She only knew that the silence seemed age-long, the pause cruel, and that her heart was beating so loudly that it seemed to her that he must

hear it. At last, 'Do you mean,' he asked, his voice muffled and uncertain, 'that it is all over between you?'

'It is quite over between us,' she answered soberly. 'It was a mistake from the beginning. Fortunately we discovered it in time.'

'When—when did he——'

'Oh, before this arose. Some time before this arose.' She spoke lightly, but her cheeks were hot.

'He did not tell me.'

'No?'

'No,' Basset repeated. He spoke angrily, as if he felt this a grievance, but in no other way could he have masked his emotion. Perhaps he did not mask it altogether, for she was observing him—ah, how keenly was she observing him! 'On the contrary, he led me to believe,' he continued, 'that things were as before between you, and that he would tell you this himself. It was for that reason that I let a week go by before I wrote to you.'

'Just so,' she said, squeezing her handkerchief into a ball, and telling herself that the worst was over now, the story told, that in another minute this would be done and past. 'Just so, I quite understand. At anyrate there is no longer any question of that, Mr. Basset. And now,' briskly, 'may I see this famous deed which is to do so much. You brought it with you, I hope?'

'Yes, I brought it,' he answered heavily. He took a packet of papers from his breast-pocket, and it did not escape her—she was cooler now—that his fingers were not as steady as a man's fingers should be. The packet he brought out was tied about with old and faded green ribbon, and bore a docket on the outside. She looked at it with curiosity. That ribbon had been tied by a long-dead hand in the reign of Queen Anne! Those yellowish papers had lain in damp and darkness a hundred and forty years, that in the end they might take John Audley's life! 'I brought them from the bank this afternoon,' he explained. 'They have been in the bank's custody since they were handed to me, and I must return them to the bank to-night.'

'Everything depends upon them, I suppose?'

'Everything.'

'But I thought that it was a deed—just one paper,' she said.

'The actual instrument is a deed. This one!' He took it from the series as he untied the packet. 'The other papers are

of value as corroboration. They are letters, original letters, bearing on the preparation of the agreement. They were found all together as they are now, and in the same order. I did not disclose the letters to Audley, or to his lawyer, because I had not then gone through them; nor was it necessary to disclose them. I have since examined them, and they provide ample proof of the genuineness of the deed.'

'So that you think . . . ?'

'I do not think that it can be contested. I am sure that it cannot—with success. And if it be admitted, your opponent's case is gone. It was practically common ground in the former suit that if this agreement could be produced and proved his claim fell to the ground. Yours remains. I do not suppose,' Basset concluded, 'that he will contest it, save as a matter of form.'

'I am sorry for him,' she said thoughtfully. And almost for the first time her eyes met his. But he was not responsive. He shrugged his shoulders. 'He has had it long enough to feel the loss of it,' she continued, still bidding for his sympathy. 'May I look at that now—the deed?' She held out her hand.

He gave it to her. It was a folded sheet of parchment, yellow with age and not very large, perhaps ten inches square. Three or four seals of green wax on ribbon ends dangled from it. It was written all over in a fine and curious penmanship, its initial letter adorned with a portrait of Queen Anne; altogether a pretty and delicate thing, but small—so small, she thought, to effect so great a change, to carry, to wreck, to make the fortunes of a house!

She handled it gently, almost fearfully, with awe and a little distaste. She turned it, she read the signatures. They were clear but faint. The ink had turned brown.

'Peter Paravicini Audley,' she murmured. 'He must have signed it sadly, to save his wife, his cousin, a young girl, a girl of my age perhaps! To save her name!' There was a quaver in her voice. Basset moved uncomfortably.

'They are all dead,' he said.

'Yes, they are all dead,' she agreed. 'And their joys and failings, hopes and fears—all dead! It seems a pity that this should live to betray them.'

'Not a pity on your account.'

'No. You are glad, of course?'

'That you should have your rights?' he said manfully. 'Of course I am.'

'And you congratulate me?' She rose and held out her hand.

Her eyes were shining, there were tears in them, and her face was marvellously soft. 'You will be the first, won't you, to congratulate me? You who have done so much for me, you who have been my friend through all? You who have brought me this? You will wish me joy?'

He was deeply moved; how deeply he could not hide from her, and her last doubt faded. He took her hand—his own was cold—but he could not speak. At last, 'May you be very happy! It is my one wish, Lady Audley!'

She let his hand fall. 'Thank you,' she said gently. 'I think that I shall be happy. And now—now,' in a firmer tone, 'will you do something for me, Mr. Basset? It is not much. Will you deal with Toft for me? You told me in your letter that he held my uncle's note for £800, to be paid in the event of the discovery of these papers? And that £300 already paid might be set off against this?'

'That is so.'

'The money should be paid, of course.'

'I fear it must be paid.'

'Will you see him and tell him that it shall be? I—I am fond of Etruria, but I am not so fond of Toft, and I would rather not—would you see him about this?'

'I quite understand,' Basset answered. 'Of course I will do it.' They had both regained the ordinary plane of feeling and he spoke in his usual tone. 'You would like me to see him now?'

'If you please.'

He went from the room. There were other things that as executor he must arrange, and when he had dealt with Toft, and not without a hard word or two that went home, had settled that matter, he went round the house and gave the orders he had to give. The light was beginning to fail and shadows to fill the corners, and as he glanced into this room and that and viewed the long-remembered places and saw ghosts and heard the voices of the dead, he knew that he was taking leave of many things, of things that had made up a large part of his life.

And he had other thoughts hardly more cheering. Mary's engagement was broken off. But how? By whom? Had she freed herself? Or had Audley, *immemor Divum*, and little foreseeing the discovery that trod upon his threshold, freed her? And if so, why? He was in the dark as to this and as to all—her attitude, her thoughts, her feelings. He knew only that while her freedom trebled the moment of the news he had brought, the gifts of

fortune which that news laid at her feet, rose insuperable between them and formed a barrier he could not pass.

For he could never woo her now. Whatever dawn of hope crept quivering above the horizon—and she had been kind, ah, in that moment of softness and remembrance she had been kind!—he could never speak now.

The dusk was far advanced and firelight was almost the only light when, after half an hour's absence, he returned to the parlour. Mary was standing before the hearth, her slender figure darkly outlined against the blaze. She held the poker in her hand, and she was stooping forward; and something in her pose, something in the tense atmosphere of the room, drew his gaze—he never knew why—to the table on which he had left the papers. It was bare. He looked round, he could not see them, a cry broke from him. 'Mary!'

'They don't burn easily,' she said, a quaver of exultation and defiance in her tone. 'Parchment is so hard to burn—so hard, though I made a good fire on purpose!'

'D—n!' he cried, and he was going to seize, he tried to seize her arm. But he saw the next moment that it was useless, he saw that it was too late. 'Are you mad? Are you mad?' he cried. Frantically, he went down on his knees, he raked among the embers. But he knew that it was futile, he had known it before he knelt, and he stood up again with a gesture of despair. 'My G—d!' he said. 'Do you know what you have done? You have destroyed what cannot be replaced! You have ruined your claim! You must have been mad! Mad, to do it!'

'Because I do not wish to be Lady Audley?' she said, facing him calmly, with her hands behind her.

'Mad!' he repeated, bitter self-reproach in his voice. For he felt himself to blame, he felt the full burden of his responsibility. He had left the papers with her, the true value of which she might not have known! And she had done this dreadful, this fatal, this irreparable thing!

She faced his anger without a quiver. 'Why mad?' she asked. She was quite at her ease now. 'Because, having been jilted by my cousin, I do not wish for this common, this vulgar, this poor revenge? Because I will not stoop to the game he plays and has played? Because I will not take from him what is little to me who have not had it, but much, nay all, to him who has?'

'But your uncle?' he cried. He was striving desperately to collect himself, trying to see the thing all round and not only

as she saw it, but in its consequences. 'Your uncle, whose one aim, whose one object in life——'

'Was to be Lord Audley? Believe me,' she answered gently, 'he sees more clearly now. And he is dead.'

'But there are still—those who come after you?'

'Will they be better, happier, more useful?' she answered. 'Will they be less Audleys, with less of ancient blood running in their veins, because of what I have done? Because I have refused to rake up this old, pitiful, forgotten stain, this scandal of Queen Elizabeth? No, a thousand times, no! And do not think, do not think,' she continued more soberly, 'that I have acted in haste or on impulse. I have not had this out of my thoughts for a moment since I knew the truth. I have weighed, carefully weighed, the price, and as carefully decided to pay it. My duty? I can do it, I hope, as well in one station as another. For the rest, there is only one who will lose by it'—she faced him bravely now—'only one who will have the right to blame me—ever.'

'I may have no right——'

'No, you have no right at present.'

'Still——'

'When you have the right—when you have gained the right, if ever, you may blame me.'

Was he deceived? Was it the fact or only his fancy, a mere will-o'-the-wisp inviting him to trouble that led him to imagine that she looked at him queerly? With a mingling of raillery and tenderness, with a tear and a smile, with something in her eyes that he had never seen in them before? With—with—but her face was in shadow, she had her back to the blaze that filled the room with dancing lights, and his thoughts were in a turmoil of confusion. 'I wish I knew,' he said in a low voice, 'what you meant by that.'

'By what?'

'By what you have just said. Did you mean that now that he—now that Audley is out of the way, there was a chance for me?'

'A chance for you?' she repeated. She stared at him in seeming astonishment.

'Don't play with me!' he cried, advancing upon her. 'You understand me? You understand me very well! Yes, or no, Mary?'

She did not flinch. 'There is no chance for you,' she answered slowly, still confronting him. 'If there be a second chance for me——'

'Ah!'

'For me, Peter?' And with that her tone told him all, all there was to tell. 'If you are willing to take me second-hand,' she continued, with a tremulous laugh, 'you may take me. I don't deserve it, but I know my own mind now. I have known it since the day my uncle died and I heard your step come through the hall. And if you are still willing?'

He did not answer her, but he took her. He held her to him, his heart too full for anything but a thankfulness beyond speech, while she, shaken out of her composure, trembled between tears and laughter. 'Peter! Peter!' she said again and again. And once, 'We are the same height, Peter!' and so showed him a new side of her nature which thrilled him with surprise and happiness.

That she brought him no title, no lands, that by her own act she had flung away her inheritance and came to him almost empty-handed was no pain to him, no subject for regret. On the contrary, every word she had said on that, every argument she had used, came home to him now with double force. It had been a poor, it had been a common, it had been a pitiful revenge! It had mingled the sordid with the cup, it had cast the shadow of the Great House on their happiness. In that room in which they had shared their first meal on that far May morning, and where the light of the winter fire now shone on the wainscote, now brought life to the ruffed portraits above it, there was no question of name or fortune, or more or less.

So much so, that when Mrs. Toft came in with the tea she well-nigh dropped the tray in her surprise. As she said afterwards, 'The sight of them two as close as chives in a bariel, I declare you might ha' knocked me down with a straw! God bless 'em!'

CHAPTER XL.

'LET US MAKE OTHERS THANKFUL.'

A MAN can scarcely harbour a more bitter thought than that he has lost by foul play what fair play would have won for him. This for a week was Lord Audley's mood and position; for masterful as he was he owned the power of Nemesis, he felt the force of tradition, nor, try as he might, could he convince himself that, in face of this oft-cited deed, his chance of retaining the title and

property was anything but desperate. He made the one attempt to see Mary of which we know; and had he seen her he would have done his best to knot again the tie which he had cut. But missing her by a hair's breadth, and confronted by Toft who knew all, he had found even his courage unequal to a second attempt. The spirit in which Mary had faced the breach had shown his plan to be from the first a counsel of despair, and despairing he let her go. In a dark mood he sat down to wait for the next step on the enemy's part, firmly resolved that whatever form it might take he would contest the claim to the bitter end.

And Stubbs was scarcely in happier case. At the time, and face to face with Basset, he had borne up well, but the production of the fateful deed had none the less fallen on him with stunning effect. He appreciated—none better and more clearly now—what the effect of his easiness would have been had Lord Audley not been engaged to his cousin; nor did his negligence appear in a less glaring light because his patron was to escape its worst results. He foresaw that whatever befel he must suffer, and that the agency which his family had so long enjoyed—that, that at any rate was forfeit.

This was enough to make him a most unhappy, a most miserable man. But it did not stand alone. Everything seemed to him to be going wrong. All good things, public and private, seemed to be verging on their end. The world as he had known it for sixty years was crumbling about his ears. It was time that he was gone.

Certainly the days of that Protection with which he believed the welfare of the land to be bound up, were numbered. In the House Lord George and Mr. Disraeli—those strangest of bed-fellows!—might rage, the old Protectionist party might foam, invective and sarcasm, taunt and sneer might rain upon the traitor as he sat with folded arms and hat drawn down to his eyes, rectors might fume and squires swear; the end was certain, and Stubbs saw that it was. Those rascals in the North, they and their greed and smoke, that stained the face of England, would win and were winning. He had saved Riddelsley by nine—but to what end? What was one vote among so many? He thought of the nut-brown ale, the teeming stacks, the wagoner's home,

'Hard-by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks.'

He thought of the sweet cow-stalls, the brook where he had bent his first pin, and he sighed. Half the country folk would be ruined, and Shoddy from Halifax and Brass from Bury would buy their lands and walk in gaiters where better men had foundered. The country would be full of new men—Peels!

Well, it would last his time. But some day there would rise another Buonaparte and they would find Cobden with his calico millennium a poor stay against starvation, his lean and flashy songs a poor substitute for wheat. It was all money now; the kindly feeling, the Christmas dole, the human ties, where father had worked for father and son for son, and the thatch had covered three generations—all these were past and gone. He found one fault, it is true, in the past. He had one regret, as he looked back. The labourers' wage had been too low; they had been left outside the umbrella of Protection. He saw that now; there was the weak point in the case. 'That's where they hit us,' he said more than once, 'the foundation was too narrow.' But the knowledge came too late.

Naturally he buried his private mishap—and my lord's—in silence. But his mien was changed. He was an altered, a shaken man. When he passed through the streets, he walked with his chin on his breast, his shoulders bowed. He shunned men's eyes. Then one day Basset entered his office and for a long time was closeted with him.

When he left Stubbs left also, and his bearing was so subtly changed as to impress all who met him; while Farthingale, stepping out in his absence, drank his way through three brown brandies in a silence which grew more portentous with every glass. At The Butterflies, whither the lawyer hastened, Audley met him with moody and repellent eyes, and in the first flush of the news which the lawyer brought refused to believe it. It was not only that the tidings seemed too good to be true, the relief from the nightmare which weighed upon him too great to be readily accepted. But the thing that Mary had done was so far out of his ken and so much beyond his understanding that he could not rise to it, or credit it. Even when he at last took in the truth of the story he put upon it the interpretation that was natural to him.

'It was a forgery!' he cried with an oath. 'You may depend upon it, it was a forgery and they discovered it.'

But Stubbs would not agree to that. Stubbs was very stout about it, and giving details of his conversation with Basset gradu-

ally persuaded his patron. In one way, indeed, the news coming through him wrought a benefit which neither Mary nor Basset had foreseen. It once more commended him to Audley, and by and by healed the breach which had threatened to sever the long connection between the lawyer and Beaudelays. If Stubbs's opinion of my lord could never again be wholly what it had been, if Audley still had hours of soreness when the other's negligence recurred to his mind, at least they were again at one as to the future. They were once more free to look forward to a time when a marriage with Lady Adela, or her like, would rebuild the fortunes of the Great House. Of Audley, whose punishment if short had been severe, one thing at least may be ventured with safety—and beyond this we need not inquire; that to the end his first, last, greatest thought would be—himself!

Late in June, the Corn Laws were repealed. On the same day Sir Robert Peel, in the eyes of some the first, in the eyes of others the last of men, was forced to resign. Thwarted by old friends and abandoned by new ones, he fell by a manœuvre which even his enemies could not defend. Whether he was more to be blamed for blindness than he was to be praised for rectitude, are questions on which party spirit has much to say, nor has history as yet pronounced a final decision. But if his hand gave the victory to the class from which he sprang, he was at least free from the selfishness of that class. He had ideals, he was a man,

‘He nothing common did nor mean
Upon that memorable scene,
But bowed his comely head
Down as upon a bed.’

Nor is it possible, even for those who do not agree with him, to think of his dramatic fall without sympathy.

In the same week Basset and Mary were married. They spent their honeymoon after a fashion of their own, for they travelled through the north of England, and beginning with the improvements which Lord Francis Egerton was making along the Manchester Canal, they continued their quiet journey along the inland waterways which formed in the 'forties a link, now forgotten, between the great cities. In this way—somewhat to the disgust of Mary's new maid, whose name was Joséphine—they visited strange things; the famous land-warping upon the Humber, the Doncaster drainage system in Yorkshire, the Horsfall dairies.

They brought back to the old gabled house at Blore some ideas which were new even to old Hayward—though the 'Duke' would never have admitted this.

'Now that we are not protected, we must bestir ourselves,' Basset said on the last evening before their return. 'I'll inquire about a seat, if you like,' he added reluctantly.

Mary was standing behind him. She put her hand on his shoulder. 'You are paying me out, Peter,' she said. 'I know now that I don't know as much as I thought I knew.'

'Which means?' Basset said, smiling.

'That once I thought that nothing could be done without an earthquake. I know now that it can be done with a spade.'

'So that where Mary was content with nothing but a gilt coach, Mrs. Basset is content with a nutshell.'

'If you are in the nutshell,' Mary answered softly, 'only—for what we have received, Peter—let us make other people thankful.'

'We will try,' he answered.

THE END.

the ideas
' would

rselves,'
inquire

on his
I know

nout an
coach,

ly—for
ankful.'